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The First Book of Kings



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WITH

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EDITED BY

THE REV. W. O. BURROWS, M.A.

PRINCIPAL OF THE CLERGY SCHOOL, LEEDS

SECOND EDITION

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PREFACE

THE notes in this edition aim at guiding the reader of the text, rather than at using it as the starting-point for the discussion of difficult questions. Thus where a point is not known with some degree of probability, it is as a rule passed by in silence; and details of little significance in geography, or the fittings of the Temple, are not discussed. But it not unfrequently happens that the notes are fewest where the text is most interesting.

The author has kept recent theories about the Old Testament and the religion of Israel constantly in mind, and without obtruding them prematurely, hopes that he has prepared the way so that when the time comes for facing them, as come it must, there will be less shock than if the traditional views had been confidently asserted.

It seems unnecessary in a school book to give references to the authorities used, even in the Preface. It will be enough to commend Dr. Lumby's edition in the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges to those who desire more elaborate notes.

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INTRODUCTION

THE COMPOSITION AND CONTENTS OF THE BOOKS OF KINGS

THE Books of Kings were certainly not written straight off as we have them now. Nor were they composed as Gibbon or Mommsen compose history. The writer, whoever he was,¹ adopted a simpler method. He took a bit from this previous writer, and a bit from that, and then pieced them together into a framework of his own invention. We all remember how his framework goes. "Now the rest of the acts of Abijam and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the Kings of Judah? And Abijam slept with his fathers . . . and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In the twentieth year of Jeroboam King of Israel began Asa to reign over Judah; and forty and one years reigned he in Judah: and his mother's name was Maachah." Sentences like this occur again and again to finish off one reign and begin another, and we may attribute them all to the compiler who arranged and put together the records and the narratives which he borrowed from elsewhere.

The Books
of Kings
a com-
pilation.

But whence did he take this other material? He tells us. He mentions (*a*) the Book of the Acts of Solomon, for Solomon's reign; (*b*) the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, and (*c*) the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, for the reigns of the kings of the two kingdoms after the division. What, then, were these books? Let us first rid ourselves of a common mistake: they are none of them the

The
sources
of the
narrative.

¹ It is thought that he lived at the beginning of the sixth century B.C. The last date mentioned in 2 Kings is 562 (xxv. 27-30), but this may be a later addition.

same as that which we find in our Bibles under the name of the two Books of Chronicles. Our Books of Chronicles only tell us about the kings of Judah, so they cannot be (*c*). They are not called the Book of the Acts of Solomon, and they include many more reigns than his, so they cannot be (*a*). And they cover a great deal more ground than (*b*) did, for they begin with Adam, and only come to the kings of Judah (after Solomon) in chap. x. of the second Book.¹ Thus we are driven to the conclusion that the Books of the Chronicles of Israel and Judah which are quoted in Kings are lost, except so far as bits of them are preserved in the quotations.

Let us then see what we can learn from the Books of Kings themselves. We find that Solomon and other kings each kept a recorder or chronicler (*c*. iv. 3, 2 Kings xviii. 18). His duty was to keep the official records, or chronicles, of the reign. And we conclude that the Books of Chronicles referred to by the compiler of the Books of Kings were either these records themselves or else books based upon them. But these chronicles would only relate political history, the public and official doings of the kings. And there must have been other records besides these, from which the compiler of the Books of Kings borrowed. It is thought, then, that (*a*) archives were also kept in the Temple, which would contain lists of the Temple properties, and a record of the Dedication and the like (chap. vi.–viii.). (*b*) We learn from 2 Chron. that various prophets wrote histories of the events of their times, viz.:—

under Solomon, Nathan the prophet, Ahijah the Shilonite,
Iddo the seer (2 Chron. ix. 29);
under Rehoboam, Shemaiah the prophet, and Iddo the seer
(2 Chron. xii. 15);
under Abijah, the prophet Iddo (2 Chron. xiii. 22);
under Jehoshaphat, Jehu the son of Hanani (2 Chron. xx. 34).

And, no doubt, the later writers of history made use of these prophetic narratives. It seems almost certain, for example, that the story of Elijah was first written down by some members of the schools of the prophets; and then this account was used by the compiler of Kings.

Out of these varying materials, then, our Books of Kings were put together, and Hebrew scholars notice differences of

¹ Other and stronger reasons for the conclusion may be seen in any book on the date of the composition of the Books of Chronicles.

style between the different parts, which are, to some extent, traceable even in the English translation.

The contents of 1 Kings are the history of the reign of Solomon, and then of four kings who sat on his throne (Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat), and of the seven first kings of the northern kingdom (Jeroboam I., Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab): in all a period of rather more than a century, cut out of the middle of the history of the children of Israel.

Contents of
1 Kings—
about B.C.
974 to 853.

The book both begins and ends abruptly. The first word of 1 Kings and the first word of 2 Kings are both "and." First, then, it is admitted on all hands that 1 Kings and 2 Kings are really only a single book. The case is the same with 1 and 2 Samuel; and the divisions of each of the larger books into two parts are only arbitrary, and were made first by the writers of the Septuagint, who translated the books into Greek.¹ They regarded the (double) Book of Samuel and the (double) Book of Kings as four books on the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Hence, 1 Samuel is called in Greek (Septuagint) and Latin (Vulgate) 1 Kings, and what we call 1 Kings is called 3 Kings. And this is what is meant when, in the heading in our Bibles, the book is called "The first Book of the Kings, commonly called the third Book of the Kings"; for when the Authorised Version was made the Vulgate titles for the books were the common, and the Hebrew titles the uncommon names for them. Three hundred years have just reversed the position, and it would be truer now to say "The first Book of the Kings, *sometimes* called the third."

The Books
of Samuel
and Kings
really
continuous.

Secondly, the division between Samuel and Kings is older than that between their respective parts; but it is also so artificial that it seems likely that it does not date from the original compilers of the two books, but from the later writer who inserted 2 Samuel xxi.–xxiv. between 2 Samuel xx. and 1 Kings i., or from someone later still.

1 Kings, then, is the third quarter of what may once have been a single book, including the history of all the kings from Samuel to Zedekiah; and there is no particular reason why it should either begin or end exactly where it does.

¹ From them it has been adopted by modern printers of Hebrew Bibles.

TEXT

The Hebrew text,

There is no need to say much about the text of 1 Kings, for such has been the minute accuracy of Jewish copyists and printers, and the zeal with which any copies containing erroneous (or even divergent) readings have been destroyed, that the Hebrew text of our Bibles has been unaltered for centuries. But this system of stereotyping one particular text had its beginning; and the Greek translation, the Septuagint, was made before the Hebrew was thus unalterably fixed. We find, therefore, in the Septuagint various deviations from the Hebrew, which sometimes bring us closer to the original. But the Septuagint itself is to be found in two sets of manuscripts, whose readings vary to a certain extent; and the translation from the Hebrew was not always made by very learned and careful men. It would, therefore, be a grave mistake to desert our present Hebrew text for the Septuagint, though it sometimes happens that a reference to the Septuagint explains some difficulty. A word or a sentence may have dropped out or have been misread in the Hebrew, and the mistake have been faithfully reproduced for centuries by the copyists, while all the time the key lay in the Septuagint. 1 Kings vi. 20 affords an instance of such correction by help of the Septuagint, and xv. 10 and 13 may, perhaps, be another.

and the Septuagint (Greek) text.

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF ISRAEL

The importance of Palestine in history.

Palestine is a small country about the size of Belgium, with now only a tenth part of its population, but in Solomon's time with perhaps half. In the great movements of the nations it naturally played but a small part, out of all comparison with its moral and religious significance. Its only importance in the eyes of the world lay in its position on the high road between Asia and Africa. Successive powers overran Western Asia in turn, the Hittites, Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Macedonia, with vast armies far outnumbering those of Israel and Judah, and each, in turn, had its wars with Egypt, and Palestine lay on the route of the advancing forces. Once only did the Israelites rise to anything like the footing of these great world-powers, and that was in the days of David and Solomon. The centralization of the nation under a military monarchy first delivered

Only once really independent—under Solomon.

them, under Saul and David, from the hands of their Philistine oppressors; soon afterwards, under David, they stretched their borders to the east and south-east, subduing Edom, Moab, and Ammon; then, further away towards the north-east, capturing Damascus, and defeating Zobah and even Syrians from beyond the Euphrates. It would seem that at this epoch the great powers were dormant: the Hittites were dying down, Assyria was passing through a period of decline, Babylon did not interfere, and with Egypt Solomon entered into an alliance, marrying the daughter of Pharaoh. Another power of almost equal importance was Phoenicia, with her navy and trade, her colonies and maritime enterprise. And with her, too, Solomon entered into alliance and treaty.

The political aggrandizement of these reigns was naturally accompanied by a great advance in civilization and luxury. There is a vast difference between the simplicity of Saul's court and retinue, and the magnificence of Solomon. This increase of outward majesty was closely connected with the choice of Jerusalem as the permanent capital, and the adornment of it with costly buildings. There, accordingly, architecture began to flourish, but we see that the arts of building were not natural to the Jews (as apparently music was), for most of Solomon's builders and workmen were Phoenicians. David first built a house for himself at Jerusalem, and then planned to build a Temple for the Lord, a purpose which Solomon carried out, while he superseded David's palace by a more splendid one of his own.

**Growth of
luxury and
the arts.**

The learning for which Solomon was famous was doubtless, like his taste for architecture, a link between him and the older civilizations of Egypt and Babylon.

But, unhappily, Solomon's splendour was built up by severe taxation and oppression, and his admission of alien worships undermined the religious unity of the nation, and sapped the best men's confidence in the royal house of Judah. Moreover, he allowed Hadad to raise a successful revolt in Edom, and Rezon to establish himself in Damascus, and thus he lost much of the territory David had won. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to think that the great division into the two kingdoms of Ephraim¹ and Judah, which followed Solomon's death, is to be attributed entirely to the events of

**Solomon's
oppression
and
idolatry.**

**The
division
of the
kingdoms
only partly
due to this**

¹ The northern kingdom is often called Ephraim, because that was the leading tribe in it.

his reign. On the contrary, the jealousy between North and South was of long standing. For example, on the death of Saul the ten northern tribes maintained the claims of his house, and for some years Saul's son, Ishbosheth, reigned at Mahanaim, while David reigned over Judah at Hebron. Again, after the defeat of Absalom, we find a rivalry between North and South as to which should be foremost in bringing David back to Zion. And out of this rivalry grew the revolt of Sheba, whose party consisted of the northern tribes. So that it would not be too much to say that the division was normal, and the union under the strong government of the three kings—Saul, David, and Solomon—the exception.

The weakness of the later kings.

When Solomon died, and Rehoboam's ill-timed roughness precipitated the division, the nation quickly lost all its political influence on the world around. Wars between the two divisions, and the invasion of Shishak, king of Egypt,¹ crippled their resources; and on the north-east the power of Damascus quickly rose, till Asa invoked the aid of Benhadad, its king, against Baasha, and in the next generation the king of Syria defeated the united forces of Israel and Judah. One hundred years later a far greater power than the Syrians, namely the Assyrians, swept over the whole country, and annihilated first Syria, and then Israel, while Judah was left a century longer, only to fall a victim to Babylon.

The northern kingdom the stronger.

When we compare the relative importance of the two kingdoms, it is needful to correct the prejudice that the religious influence of Jerusalem inevitably raises. Politically the northern kingdom soon became the greater, although it was always far more subject to revolutions. Unlike Jerusalem, the seat of government in the North was frequently changed: it was first at Shechem, then successively at Penuel and Tirzah, till Omri built Samaria, which remained the capital till the end. Again, while the South remained true to the House of David, the dynasties in the North were changed still more often than the capitals. Jeroboam was succeeded by his son Nadab; and Baasha, who dethroned Nadab, by his son; then Zimri's revolt only succeeded for seven days, when he was displaced by Omri. Thus two dynasties passed away in half a century; the third, that of Omri, lasted for four reigns, and the next,

¹ It is inferred from the monument of Shishak at Karnak in Egypt, that he overran the whole of Palestine, and took tribute from Jeroboam as well as from Rehoboam. See note on xiv. 19.

that of Jehu, for five; and then the confusion began again, and the kingdom came to an end with a number of "phantom kings," who held a merely nominal power for brief periods. But in the midst of this rapid succession of dynasties the two great families of Omri and Jehu succeeded for 150 years in maintaining peace and order, a court of some splendour at home, and a fairly successful policy abroad. Moab, for example, which had, it seems, taken advantage of the divisions of Israel to throw off the yoke of subjection, was reconquered by Omri; and for forty (?) years it paid tribute to Samaria, only, however, to revolt again in the later days of Ahab.¹

Religiously, the northern tribes still worshipped Jehovah, and Jehovah only, until Jezebel introduced the Phoenician gods. And Jeroboam's opposition to the exclusive claims of the Temple at Jerusalem, though selfishly political in motive, is not to be regarded as an open defiance of God's known will. For it is clear that the consciences of good men of that period felt no strain in offering sacrifices to God in various spots up and down the country ("high places"). Thus Solomon sacrificed both at Gibeon and at Jerusalem; and Elijah offered sacrifice on Mount Carmel; and there is no breath of blame attaching to either in the matter.² At a later date, however, the compiler of 1 Kings throws back blame on the kings who did not put down all ceremonial worship at high places, and confine sacrifice to Jerusalem, leaving to country towns and villages only the services of the synagogue, namely, prayer and reading, without sacrifice or incense. In fact, the law laid down in Deuteronomy³ that there should be only a single central sanctuary, was either not yet promulgated, or forgotten. And, indeed, it only became practically possible to carry it out, first, when the nation had been united under the monarchy of David and Solomon, and the Temple built as the national centre of worship; and again, after the destruction of the northern kingdom, in the days of Hezekiah, when he could invite the remnant to join in his great Passover at Jerusalem (2 Chron. xxx.). Jeroboam, then, was not so much guilty of what in modern language we should call schism, as of idolatry. He did defy what he knew to be God's express command, by setting up calves as emblems of Jehovah, emblems, too, which, to men of that

**Its
idolatry.**

**The calf-
images of
Jeroboam.**

¹ See "The Moabite Stone," p. 105.

² *e.g.* Solomon in 1 Kings iii. 2, 3.

³ Especially in chap. xii.

Baal-worship established by Ahab.

age and country, suggested His identification with the sun and various gods of the heathen. But still he meant to worship Jehovah, the national God of the children of Israel, and it was not till Ahab fell under Jezebel's influence that any king of Ephraim acted like Solomon, and allowed the worship of alien gods to be openly practised. At last Jezebel went much further than Solomon, for she hunted down the prophets of Jehovah, and sought to enforce her idolatrous worships on all Ahab's subjects. Yet, at the end of his reign, we find the false prophets, who lure him to his ruin, still professing to speak in the name of Jehovah. There seems, then, to be some inconsistency in the accounts, and we are not able to ascertain the exact terms of the conflict between the worship of Jehovah (probably in very corrupt forms) and the worship of Baal and of the Asherah. It is, however, clear that, in spite of Elijah and Elisha, true religion declined, in the northern kingdom, till it was too feeble to bear the chastisement of the captivity, and died out in exile.

Condition of Judah.

The loss of by far the greater part of the territory governed by Solomon reduced the southern kingdom to a very humble position. It was overrun by the Egyptians, and for some time suffered from constant wars with Ephraim. And though Asa succeeded in repelling a second Egyptian invasion, and in averting the threatened attack of Baasha, still, so long as the dynasties of Omri and Jehu governed Israel, Judah was comparatively insignificant: her chief effort was to get a port on the Red Sea and trade with the East.

And when Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram or Joram, married¹ Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, the prevailing influence at Jerusalem was, for twenty years, that of Samaria.

Appearances, however, were deceptive; the glories of Samaria were built on no sure foundation, and soon fell to ruin, and the hope of the Israelites lay in the weaker, but more religious,² kingdom of Judah, and the line of David.

¹ It is quite likely that this alliance was forced on the reluctant Jehoshaphat by the superior power of Samaria.

² In Judah, too, there were times of idolatry and immorality. Rehoboam and Abijah were worse than any of the northern kings, at least till Ahab.

THE TEMPLE

THE Temple of Solomon was in its essence the old Tabernacle of the wilderness, but built in stone and with length, breadth, and height doubled. In both cases there was a large area open to the sky, with a small covered building in the centre.

The surrounding area was arranged by Solomon in courts divided by walls or fences, and standing on different levels, the inmost being the highest. All public worship was conducted in these open courts. Immediately round the central building was the Court of the Priests, which contained the Altar of Burnt-offering, on which the daily sacrifices were burnt regularly morning and evening, and of course very frequently other sacrifices besides. This altar was in full view of the congregation. In this court also were the sea of brass for the priests' ablutions, and the lavers for washing the victims before they were burnt on the altar. According to later rules, none but the Priests and Levites should have entered this court. But Solomon, and probably David and other kings, and perhaps the laity in general, came in to offer sacrifices there.

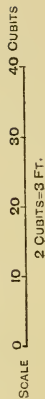
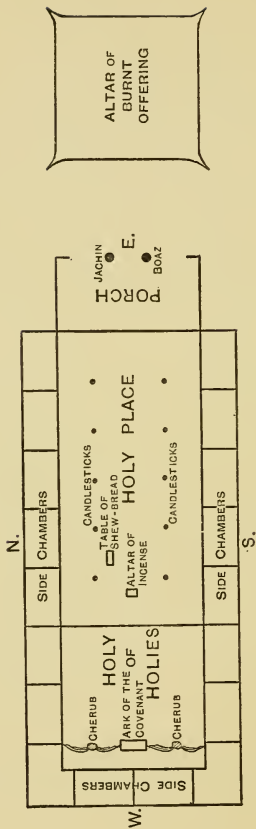
Outside and below the Court of the Priests came the Court of the men of Israel, and (at any rate in Herod's Temple if not in Solomon's) the Court of Women and the Court of the Gentiles. In these courts the congregation assembled in the open air, and here they watched the sacrifices and prayed. They also contained some covered buildings, cloisters, chambers or out-houses, erected at different times, and used for various purposes. The whole area covered perhaps two or three acres in the case of Solomon's Temple; in Herod's eight acres.

The central building, whether Tabernacle or Temple, consisted of two parts: the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, of which the latter, unlike our chancels, was to the west of the former.

The Holy of Holies contained the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy-seat.¹ It was entered only on one day in the

¹ What exactly this was and its relation to the Ark are not known.

GROUND-PLAN OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE



year, the Day of Atonement, and only by the High Priest. In Solomon's Temple it was a perfect cube, 30 feet each way, perfectly dark, with no window or opening except the entrance to it from the Holy Place, which was covered by sliding doors, and probably by a curtain also. When the High Priest entered, he carried with him a censer with burning coals, and this may have given him light enough to discharge his office of sprinkling the sacrificial blood before the Mercy-seat.

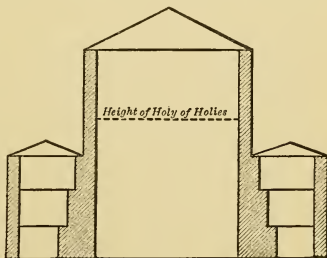
The Holy Place was lighted by clerestory windows (above the side-chambers to be mentioned below), and by candlesticks—in Solomon's Temple ten in number. It contained the golden Altar of Incense and the Table of the Shewbread. Twice every day a priest entered the Holy Place, namely, the one whose "lot it was to enter into the Temple of the Lord and burn incense"; it is said that in later days this office only fell to each priest once in his lifetime. The Priests must also have entered to trim the lamps on the candlesticks, which were kept always burning, and once a week to change the shewbread. Except on the Day of Atonement, no blood was ever brought into the Holy Place. In dimensions the Holy Place in Solomon's Temple was 60 feet long by 30 feet wide and 45 feet high, *i.e.*, something like the proportions of a racquet-court, only half as large again each way.

Outside the Holy Place, at its east end, ran the Porch, 15 feet deep. Here stood the two lofty brazen pillars, Jachin and Boaz, whose meaning and use is as much disputed as their shape. Round the other three sides of the building there were erected three tiers of chambers, one above the other, which were no doubt used as vestries, muniment-

Section through the Holy Place, showing the side chambers resting on ledges on the outside of the great walls.

No one knows what was the shape of the roof, whether flat as in oriental houses, or with a pitch like a tent, as is shown in the drawing.

The dotted line marks the height of the Holy of Holies.



rooms, and storehouses. The two upper floors were reached by staircases running from the ground-floor chambers, and these last had probably no openings into the Temple itself.

The style of architecture adopted is not known, but it seems likely that it would be Phoenician. The material was quarried stone ; but all inside was so overlaid that nothing was visible except cedar and gold.

Under Solomon's successors the Temple was often spoiled of its treasures by enemies, or by kings anxious to raise money ; and some of them polluted it by introducing into it idolatrous emblems and false worships. We also hear of restorations being effected more than once. Finally it was burnt to the ground and utterly destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and all that was valuable was carried away to Babylon, to be restored seventy years later by Cyrus and Darius. At the time of the destruction the Ark disappeared, and has never been heard of since.

A new Temple on the old site was erected by Zerubbabel on the Return from the Captivity, and was dedicated in B.C. 516. It stood exactly 500 years, and then was pulled down by Herod the Great, who wished to replace it by a more magnificent structure. His plan involved a great enlargement of the site and of the buildings in the outer courts, and the work was only completed A.D. 63. Seven years later the Temple was destroyed by the Romans, never to rise again. A Mahomedan mosque now stands on the site, and to this day the Jews resort to the ruins to bewail the desecration of their holy and beautiful House.

THE PROPHETS

A prophet properly means a spokesman, one appointed to speak in someone else's name. Aaron is Moses' prophet (Ex. vii. 1, iv. 16). Jeremiah is as Jehovah's mouth (Jer. xv. 19, i. 9). The prophets therefore usually begin their utterance with "Thus saith the LORD"; and their message is constantly called "the word of the LORD." This message might or might not contain a prediction of the future. Moses *e.g.* is a typical prophet (Deut. xviii. 18); he spoke to the people on God's behalf (Ex. xx. 19), but there is but little prediction in his sayings. And the same might be said of Samuel. Jonah again (we are told) predicted the immediate destruction of Nineveh, but this was averted by the people's penitence: yet he was none the less a true prophet, because his warnings had their effect. When the prophets predict, as they often do, it is for the benefit primarily of those of their own day who heard them; God sent them to warn or encourage, to threaten or kindle hope. It is true that their words often had depths of meaning beyond what their contemporaries, or probably they themselves, realized; and it was only in our Lord that their prophecies were "fulfilled," filled out fully, as *e.g.* Isaiah liii. But there was always a primary reference to the needs of the moment, and it has been a disastrous mistake to look upon prophecy merely as "the history of events before they come to pass."

Another common error is to think of the prophets as almost isolated, each in his generation. On the contrary, there were always numbers of prophets from the days of Samuel (1 Sam. iii. 1, 20, 21, ix. 9, x. 5) to the Captivity. For prophecy was a profession for which men were trained. There were guilds or schools of prophets, an institution said to have been founded by Samuel. Members of these guilds were called "sons of the prophets" (1 Kings xx. 35), not that they were a hereditary caste, but that they handed on traditions from their predecessors. Sometimes they lived in communities, which must have been something like monasteries and something like theological colleges. There the younger members would be occupied in preparation for the prophets' work of preaching the word, the elder often, as it would seem, employed like mediaeval monks in keeping records of events (see p. x.), as well as in religious exercises and in training the younger members. We hear of such communities in Samuel's time at Gibeah and Ramah (1 Sam. x. 10, xix. 20), in Elisha's days at Bethel, Jericho, Gilgal, and perhaps Carmel (2 Kings ii. 3, 5, iv. 38, and iv. 25, etc.); all

of them, we may notice, in the northern kingdom. The prophets seem to have worn a hairy mantle as a sort of uniform (Zech. xiii. 4; 2 Kings i. 8); and they often enforced their meaning by symbolic acts (1 Kings xi. 31, xxii. 11).

Of these numerous prophets some were true, some false. The false cried "Jehovah saith" when He had not sent them (Ezek. xiii. 6). They said what would be popular, or gain them favour with the king; or, since the prophets were looked upon with half-superstitious dread as having power with God, they threatened ruin in order that the king might buy off their curses (Amos vii. 12). The true prophet was practically much like a Christian preacher; he tried to teach people to be righteous and God-fearing. (*Cf.* the prophets in 1 Cor. xiv). For a long time they spoke and did not write their message. Only when men persisted in unbelief did they put their warnings on record, that men might know that there had been a prophet among them (*e.g.* see Jer. xxxvi).

Prophecy was not confined to Israel, or to the worshippers of the true God; for while some prophesied in the name of Jehovah, others did so in the name of Baal (xviii. 19). And there were the oracles in Greece, and among the Arabs Mahomed claimed to be the prophet of God. Sometimes, especially among the worshippers of idols, we find the prophets raving in frenzy, like the howling and dancing dervishes of to-day. (See xviii. 28, and compare 1 Sam. xix. 20-24.) 1 Sam. x. 5 and 2 Kings iii. 15 connect music with prophecy. "But the method of true revelation has nothing in common with the art of the diviner. . . . The characteristic of the true prophet is that he retains his consciousness and self-control under revelation."¹

The following prophets are mentioned in 1 Kings:—Nathan (i. 8), Ahijah (xi. 29 and xiv. 2), Shemaiah (xii. 22 and 2 Chron. xii. 5), "a man of God out of Judah" (xiii.), "an old prophet in Bethel" (xiii. 11), Jehu the son of Hanani (xvi. 1 and 2 Chron. xix. 2), Elijah (xvii. etc.), Elisha (xix. 16), certain prophets in chap. xx. (*vv.* 13, 22, 28, 35), Micaiah (xxii. 8), and Zedekiah (xxii. 11).

In the chapters of 2 Chronicles which treat of this period, besides the above-mentioned and those who wrote the prophetic histories (see p. x.), we hear of Azariah the son of Oded (xv. 1, called Oded in *v.* 8), Hanani (xvi. 7), Jahaziel (xx. 14), and Eliezer the son of Dodavahu (xx. 37).

¹ ROBERTSON SMITH, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 2nd ed., pp. 288, 289.

THE GODS OF THE HEATHEN

In the first Book of Kings mention is made of the worship of several gods and goddesses besides Jehovah, the LORD.¹ At this period, among the Semitic² peoples each nation was supposed to have its own special god, who protected it; he was, as it were, attached to the soil (2 Kings xvii. 26 foll.), and to go outside his territory was to pass into the sphere of some other god (1 Sam. xxvi. 19). Immigrants, however, often brought their worship with them, and combined it with the local cult: a proceeding which caused little difficulty among polytheists (2 Kings xvii. 41). Moreover, the ideas connected with the different gods of kindred tribes would be very similar, and so their worships were often confused.³ The ordinary Israelite of this date never thought of Jehovah as the god of the heathen or of the whole earth; but it was his duty as a Hebrew to worship Jehovah, and to worship any other god was faithlessness, like that of an unfaithful wife. The gods of the other nations existed, each in his sphere (*e.g.* see Judges xi. 24), but were not to be treated with reverence. The idea that there was but one God of all the nations of the earth was held by a few, *e.g.* by prophets like Amos and Isaiah; and then the experiences of the captivity in Babylon widened men's conceptions of Jehovah's sway; but the idea of a single Catholic or universal religion only began to inspire missionary effort under the influence of our Lord and of St. Paul.

Accordingly just as the God of Israel was Jehovah, so the god of Moab was Chemosh, and the god of Ammon a deity known to us by the names of Milcom and Molech, words

¹ This word, when printed in capitals, always represents Jehovah, the personal name of God. The later Jews, from reverence, never pronounced this sacred name, but used a word meaning "lord" instead. Hence the Sept. *κύριος* and English LORD. In this way the tradition of the true pronunciation died out; but it was probably Yahweh. The vowels of Jehovah are certainly wrong, the consonants right.

² Those supposed to be descended from Shem, viz. the Hebrews and kindred races.

³ Thus Ashtor-Chemosh occurs on the Moabite Stone (see p. 105).

which mean "king," and are not proper names at all. And Solomon's wives naturally wished to introduce the worship of these their native gods into Jerusalem. We know very little of the worship of Chemosh, except that the King of Moab offered up his eldest son to the god (2 Kings iii. 27), a practice which at times threatened to take root in Israel, but which was forbidden in the name of Jehovah by His prophets and representatives (*e.g.*, Micah vi. 7.) Molech was propitiated by the burning of children in his honour. This horrible rite was established in Jerusalem by Ahaz and Manasseh (see also Jer. vii. 31); but 2 Kings xvii. 17 is the only passage which speaks of its being practised in the northern kingdom.

Baal means the owner of the land, lord, husband; and in old days it had so little suggestion of evil that the title was applied to Jehovah. Thus Saul called one of his sons Esh-baal, and Jonathan his son Merib-baal (1 Chron. viii. 33, 34, see R.V. margin). But later on the title becomes the proper name of the god of the Phoenicians,¹ who was also called Melkarth, and was identified by the Greeks with Heracles. Ashtoreth (*ō*) was his consort, and was perhaps associated with the Moon or the planet Venus; in Herodotus i. 105 it is probably her temple (at Ashkelon) that is called the temple of Aphrodite. Both Baal and Ashtoreth were worshipped under several titles, like the gods of Greece and Rome, and so we find in the Bible the plural forms Baalim and Ashtaroth. The worship of these gods was generally licentious and immoral.

Some think that Asherah (*ē* like French *ê*)² was another and distinct goddess of fertility; others that the word means the sacred emblem of Ashtoreth. But more probably the pole or tree, called the Asherah, was used as a sacred emblem and even embodiment of any god or goddess; for it seems that idolatrous worshippers of Jehovah Himself might associate an Asherah with Him, since Jehu, who stamped out the worship of Baal, left an Asherah standing at Samaria. (2 Kings xiii. 6.) The prophets of the Asherah, mentioned chap. xviii. 19, do not reappear in the story, even in *v.* 40. It has therefore been suggested that the words about them in *v.* 19 contain some mistake. There is certainly no mention of such prophets anywhere else.

¹ See note on xvi. 31.

² The word is mistranslated "grove" in A.V.

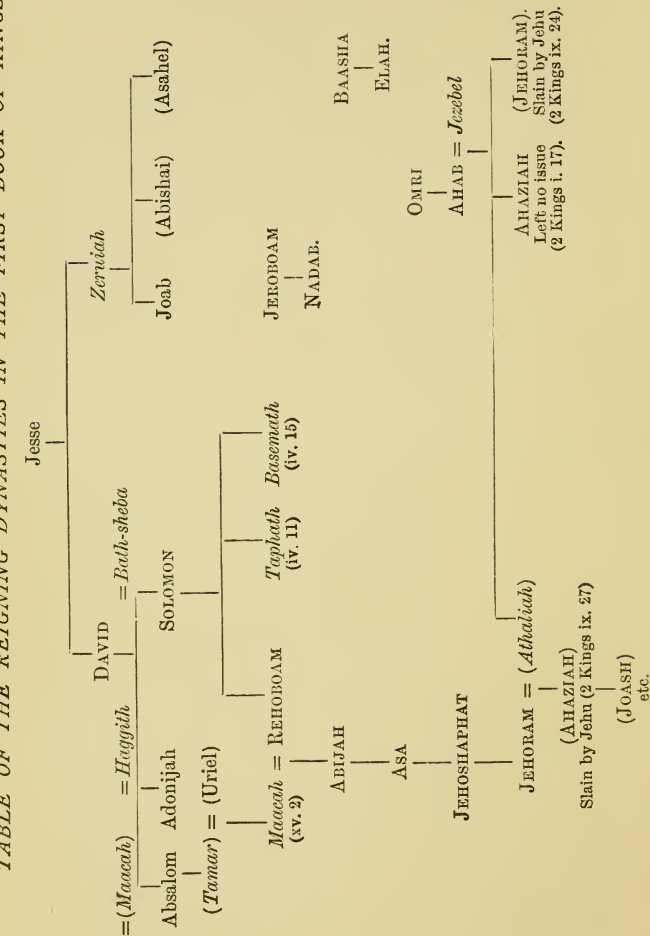
*THE VALUE OF THE HISTORICAL BOOKS
OF THE BIBLE*

In the Books of Kings we have the common everyday history of the children of Israel. It seems, for the most part, to be much like the history of any other nation: there are wars, revolutions and conspiracies, the rise and fall of dynasties, dull periods alternating with great crises. And we begin to wonder why such narratives should have a place in the Bible. The question has more answers than one. The history is told partly to show that God does care about politics and national events: for in truth He is interested in all that may lawfully and honourably interest us. Secondly, there are lessons of national morality to be studied in history, just as we find in biography lessons about the characters of individuals. Righteousness, for example, does exalt a nation (Prov. xiv. 34), and luxury and oppression, like Solomon's, soon entail ruin. And again, though kings or states may, like Jeroboam, try to create a religion, the result of their efforts will have no power to build up national unity; thus the ten tribes, when carried away captive, seem to have been absorbed by their conquerors, just because they lacked the religious steadfastness of the Babylonian captives from Jerusalem. Thirdly, we see how God controls the movements of nations so that, though they know it not, they carry out His will. And so we see the wisdom of God manifest in History as well as in Nature.

So much would be true of any history. But, in the case of the history of the children of Israel, we may add that the nation was being trained by God to be the home of His Son when the time should come for Him to enter the world in flesh, and the record of that training exhibits some striking features of God's character, His patience, His readiness to put up with imperfect things in an imperfect age, His determination to leave men free to choose between good and evil. And we see, too, in some parts of the story—for example, the career of Elijah—God's hatred of evil, and His "jealousy" in punishing all worship of other gods.

We expect, then, to find in the Books of Kings commonplace details, and the ordinary events of history; but, as we look into the story deeper, we see more and more of God's working behind it. It is very easy to treat the book as a collection of stories of more or less interest, but it will take a wise man to learn half of what it has to teach.

TABLE OF THE REIGNING DYNASTIES IN THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS



Kings are printed in capitals, women in italics. Names not mentioned in 1 Kings are enclosed in brackets. etc.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

- UNITED KINGDOM.
- B. C.
974. DAVID. The king in extreme old age is ministered to by Abishag.
Adonijah attempts to seize the throne. David has crowned King.
974. SOLOMON * Solomon marries the daughter of Pharaoh.
* God bestows wisdom on him.
970. He begins to build the Temple, having made alliance with Hiram, King of Tyre.
963. Solomon builds his palace, etc.
950. Dedication of the Temple.
* Visit of the Queen of Sheba.
* Solomon builds high places for his wives.
* Ahijah prophesies the division of the kingdom. Jeroboam flees to Egypt.
934. Death of Solomon. Assembly at Shechem.
Revolt of the ten northern tribes.

JUDAH.

934. REHOBOAM.
Shemaiah forbids any attempt to put down the revolt.

Constant war between the two kingdoms.

923. Shishak, King of Egypt, invades Judah and (?) Israel.

917. ABIJAH.

914. ASA.
Idolatry put down.

ISRAEL.

934. JEROBOAM I.
* Fortifies Shechem and Penuel.
* Establishes calf-worship at Dan and Bethel.

* Jeroboam dwells at Tirzah.

912. NADAB (last of the house of Jeroboam).
War with the Philistines.

- * Zerah, the Ethiopian King of Egypt, defeated by Asa. 911. BAASHA. Slays Nadab and all his kinsfolk.

* In these cases the year and sometimes the order of the events is not known for certain.

JUDAH.

- * War between Judah and Israel. Baasha fortifies Ramah.
Asa purchases the help of Benhadad I., King of Damascus,
against Israel.

Asa razes Ramah to the
ground, and fortifies
Geba and Mizpah.

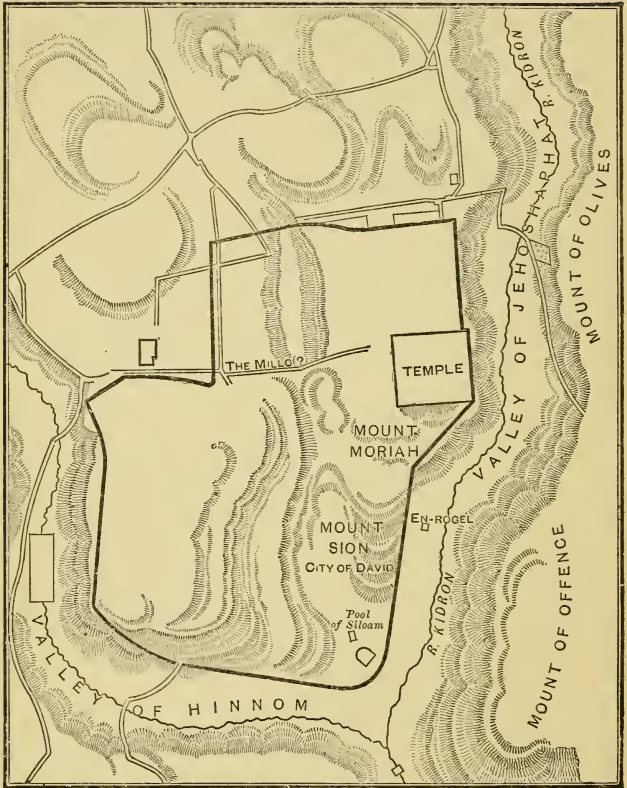
873. JEHOSEPHAT.
Edom subject to Judah.

849. JEHORAM (m. Athaliah).
843. AHAZIAH.
843. ATHALIAH (d. of Ahab and
widow of Jehoram).

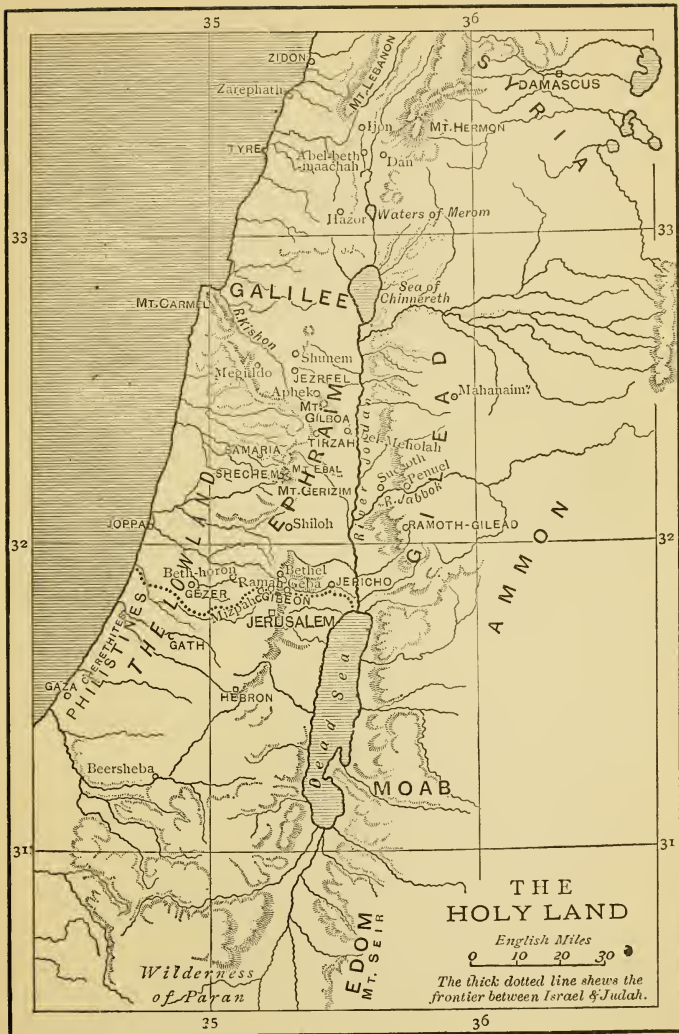
ISRAEL.

- * Jehu prophesies against
Baasha.
* War with the Philistines
renewed.
888. ELAH (last of the house of
Baasha).
887. ZIMRI slays Elah, and is
slain by Omri.
OMRI and TIBNI in con-
flict.
883. OMRI victorious.
* Omri builds Samaria.
* Omri conquers Moab.
876. AHAB. * Marries Jezebel.
* Introduces the worship of
Baal. Jericho rebuilt.
* Elijah the prophet—
The drought.
Carmel.
Horeb.
Naboth's vineyard.
* Moab revolts.
858. War between Ahab and
Benhadad II., King of
Damascus.
854. Alliance between Ahab
and Benhadad ; they are
defeated by Shalmaneser
II., King of Assyria.
Jehoshaphat in alliance with Ahab. His son Jehoram
marries Athaliah, Ahab's daughter.
853. Expedition of Jehoshaphat and Ahab against Ramoth-Gilead,
and Death of Ahab.
853. AHAZIAH.
852. JEHORAM (last of the
dynasty of Omri).
843. JEHU slays Jehoram, to-
gether with Ahaziah,
King of Judah.

N.B.—There are many difficulties in the chronology, and the
above dates are only approximate.



JERUSALEM.



THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

I.

¹ Now king David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat. ² Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. ³ So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. ⁴ And the damsel was very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not. ⁵ Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots

The last days of David.
1. Abishag.

2. Adonijah's attempt.

1. This book goes on straight in continuation of what has been related about David in 2 Samuel. The division between the two books is not as old as the books themselves. It is probable that 1 Kings i. 1 joined on to 2 Samuel xx. 26, the end of the story of Absalom; and that 2 Samuel xxi.-xxiv. were originally an appendix, and that their contents, for the most part, belong to days in David's life before the revolt of Absalom.

David was now about 70 years old.

³ *Coasts* does not mean the sea-shore, but the borders; *i.e.* here 'through all parts.' (Cf. French *côté*.)

Shunem was in the tribe of Issachar, not very far from Nazareth.

⁵ Now that Amnon and Absalom were dead, it seems likely that Adonijah was the eldest of David's living sons. It is not meant that he gathered troops to raise a revolt, but set up a royal retinue, just as Absalom had done. Horses were then almost novelties among the Israelites, and probably none but royalty could have any.

David. and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. ⁶ And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom. ⁷ And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him. ⁸ But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which belonged to David, were not with Adonijah. ⁹ And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zohemoth, which is by En-rogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants: ¹⁰ But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.

⁶ He was born after Absalom (Revised Version). He was not the child of the same mother as Absalom, as the text suggests.

⁷ *Joab* was the son of Zeruiah, David's sister, and was the brother of Abishai and Asahel. He was a great warrior, and became the "captain of the host" after the capture of Jerusalem. He led the army against Syria, Ammon, and Edom, and again against Absalom. For his character see chap. ii. 5.

Abiathar was the son of the high-priest Ahimelech, who gave David the shewbread. The father and all the family were slain by Saul, and Abiathar alone escaped to David. He was the head of the house of Ithamar (Aaron's youngest son), and was high-priest throughout David's reign; his post was with the Ark at Jerusalem. He remained faithful during Absalom's revolt.

⁸ *Zadok* was the head of the house of Eleazar (Aaron's third son), and was probably second priest in David's reign: he was in charge of the Tabernacle at Gibeon.

Benaiah was in command of the king's body-guard. (v. 38.)

Nathan, as God's mouthpiece or prophet, welcomed David's offer to build a House for God; and then brought the message that it must be deferred till his son's reign, but that *David's* house, or family, should remain for ever. He also convicted David of his great sin, and announced to him God's forgiveness; he was, therefore, specially connected with Bath-sheba and Solomon. (See also 2 Samuel xii. 25.)

Shimei—not the Shimei of chapter ii. 8. Nothing more is known of this Shimei, or of Rei.

⁹ *En-rogel* was a fountain just outside Jerusalem, on the east side, used, as the name implies, for washing clothes.

¹⁰ Adonijah knew that David had intended that Solomon

¹¹ Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the David. mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not? ¹² Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon. ¹³ Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign? ¹⁴ Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words.

¹⁵ And Bath-sheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king. ¹⁶ And Bath-sheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou? ¹⁷ And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. ¹⁸ And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not: ¹⁹ And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called. ²⁰ And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou

should succeed him, though one of the youngest of the family; and he meant to take advantage of David's feebleness, and seize the throne by a surprise.

11 *Bath-sheba* had been the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and the partner of David's adultery.

12 Among many barbarous or half-civilized nations it is the custom for a new king to remove all possible rivals. (*e.g.* 2 Chron. xxi. 4.) Such fratricide is especially common where polygamy is practised, and the rivals are sons of different mothers.

15 David was too feeble to leave his bed-chamber, so he there received first Bath-sheba, and then Nathan.

18 *i.e.* Adonijah is as good as king already.

David. shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. ²¹ Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.

²² And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. ²³ And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. ²⁴ And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? ²⁵ For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah. ²⁶ But me, even me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called. ²⁷ Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not shewed it unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?

²⁸ Then king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king. ²⁹ And the king sware, and said, As the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, ³⁰ Even as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day. ³¹ Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to

²⁵ *God save.* The Hebrew here, and in vv. 34, 39, etc., is literally, "Let the king live," as in v. 31.

²⁹ LORD in capitals represents Jehovah (probably pronounced Yahweh), the *personal* name of the God of Israel, as Apollo and Minerva were personal names. It is a pity that it is translated by a title.

David never forgot how nearly he perished at the hands of Saul, but perhaps he is now thinking rather of his great sin, and of God's mercy to him then.

the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for David ever.

³² And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. ³³ The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: ³⁴ And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. ³⁵ Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. ³⁶ And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the LORD God of my lord the king say so too. ³⁷ As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.

³⁸ So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride

³³ *Gihon* seems to have been a spring, or pond, in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

³⁴ Prophets (chap. xix. 16), priests (Exodus xxix. 7), and kings were all anointed with oil; and the Messiah (which word in Hebrew means the anointed one, and is therefore in Greek translated the Christ) combined all the three offices.

³⁶ *Amen* (literally "assuredly") means here, as in our Church services, that he who says Amen concurs in what has just been said. In the Greek Bible it is loosely translated *γένοιτο*, "so be it," as in our Catechism.

³⁷ Many men would have resented the expression of such a wish. But David was too generous not to hope that his son would outshine him.

³⁸ The Cherethites and Pelethites were a body-guard of foreign mercenaries, like the Swiss guard of Louis XVI. The Cherethites lived in the S.W. of Palestine near the sea, and were probably akin to the Philistines. Nothing is certain about the home of the Pelethites. We do not hear of this body-guard, except in the reign of David. They were under the command of Benaiah. Later kings of Judah are thought to have used Carians. (2 Kings xi. 4.)

David.

upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. ³⁹ And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon. ⁴⁰ And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

⁴¹ And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar? ⁴² And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings. ⁴³ And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king. ⁴⁴ And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule: ⁴⁵ And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise that ye have heard. ⁴⁶ And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom. ⁴⁷ And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed. ⁴⁸ And also thus said the king, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it. ⁴⁹ And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.

³⁹ *An horn*; Hebrew, *the* horn of oil, specially consecrated and set apart for such solemn uses.

⁴⁰ The last words mean much the same as is said in *v.* 45.

⁴² Jonathan had carried a message from his father to David in the days of Absalom's revolt.

"A worthy man" (R.V.). It is the same word as in *v.* 52.

⁴⁷ David bowed himself in reverence as he prayed.

⁵⁰ And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, David. and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

⁵¹ And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his servant with the sword. ⁵² And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. ⁵³ So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

II.

¹ Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, ² I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; ³ And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: ⁴ That the LORD may continue his word

^{3.} David's last charge.

⁵⁰ Adonijah "took sanctuary," putting himself, as it were, under God's protection. The horns of the altar were projections that jutted out at the corners. Both the altar of burnt-offering and the altar of incense had such horns, and part of the ritual of the sin-offering was to smear the blood upon one or other of them. Probably Adonijah fled to the altar on Mount Zion, erected by David when he brought the Ark up thither; but the altar in the Tabernacle at Gibeon may be what is meant here, as in chap. ii. 28.

II.

2-9 This charge implies more vigour than David shows in chapter i., and probably relates what happened somewhat earlier. Moreover, the style, at any rate in *vv.* 2-4, is different from that of chapter i. So it represents another conception of David's last days.

⁴ *Continue*; R. V., "establish." The reference is to God's promise that He would establish David's house for ever, given when He refused to allow David to build Him a house (or Temple), and said he must leave it for his son. (See note on i. 8; and 2 Sam. vii. 11-16; Ps. lxxxix. 28-37.)

David. which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel. ⁵ Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet. ⁶ Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace. ⁷ But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother. ⁸ And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the

⁵ *Abner* was Saul's first cousin, and commander-in-chief. On Saul's death he supported Ish-bosheth against David, and in battle slew Asahel, Joab's brother. At last Abner offered to submit to David, but Joab slew him treacherously, partly in revenge for Asahel's death, partly from jealousy, fearing lest Abner should be promoted above his head.

Amasa was David's nephew, and Joab's first cousin. When Absalom rebelled, he appointed Amasa captain of the host. After the battle in which Absalom's army was defeated, Joab, in defiance of David's orders, slew Absalom. David thereupon removed Joab from his office of captain of the host, and promised it to Amasa; but Joab, coming up to him under pretence of kindness, slew him. Joab's fierce and vengeful spirit was repugnant to a man of the generosity of David, but he was too powerful to be punished. Even after the murder of Amasa he again became captain of the host. But Solomon is charged to bide his time, and bring him to justice at last.

⁷ *Barzillai* was a rich man who brought supplies of food to David and his followers in their distress, when fleeing before Absalom.

Gilead was the fertile country east of Jordan, especially the central portion from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, the territory of the tribe of Gad.

⁸ Shimei cursed David when his cause seemed hopeless, and he was fleeing from Absalom, but on his victorious return hastened to make peace with him. In spite of Abishai, Joab's brother, David swore to Shimei that he would not kill him. We cannot approve of David's action now, unless there was fear that Shimei

son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me David. with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. ⁹ Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

¹⁰ So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. ¹¹ And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

¹² Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

¹³ And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably. ¹⁴ He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on. ¹⁵ And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it was his from the LORD. ¹⁶ And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on. ¹⁷ And he

The reign of Solomon.
1. The end of Adonijah and his party.

might prove more dangerous to Solomon than appears. Shimei was of the house of Saul. (2 Sam. xvi. 5.)

Bahurim, a village near the road leading from Jerusalem to the Jordan.

Mahanaim was a stronghold in Gilead, where Abner had established Ish-bosheth on the death of Saul, and whither David fled from Absalom.

⁹ Solomon was then by nature wise, before he showed his wisdom by confessing ignorance and asking for more wisdom. (iii. 8, 9.) "To him that hath shall be given."

¹⁰ *The city of David*, not Bethlehem, but the stronghold of Jerusalem, also called Zion. (2 Sam. v. 7.)

¹¹ *Hebron*—a very ancient city, dating from before Abraham—in the centre of David's own tribe, the tribe of Judah. The transfer of the capital to Jerusalem followed soon after the death of Ish-bosheth, and the anointing of David as king over all Israel.

¹⁵ Adonijah means that the kingdom was his by right of birth, and by popular choice as well.

Solomon.

said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife. ¹⁸ And Bath-sheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king. ¹⁹ Bath-sheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand. ²⁰ Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; I pray thee, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay. ²¹ And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife. ²² And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruah. ²³ Then king Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life. ²⁴ Now therefore, as the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day. ²⁵ And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died.

²⁶ And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou art worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death,

19 For *seat* read "throne." (R.V.)

24 *Made me an house* = given me wealth. (Cf. Ex. i. 21.)

It was the custom for the new king to take on his predecessor's harem, and so to ask for Abishag was almost to claim to be David's successor. But, probably, Adonijah argued that she had been rather a nurse than a wife, and therefore thought (or pretended to think) that there was no harm in his request.

²⁶ Solomon was convinced that behind Adonijah's application there lay a conspiracy of his old opponents, and at once stamped it out.

Anathoth—a priests' city in the tribe of Benjamin, the home of the family of the prophet Jeremiah.

because thou barest the ark of the Lord GOD before Solomon. David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted. ²⁷ So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

²⁸ Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. ²⁹ And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him. ³⁰ And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. ³¹ And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father. ³² And the LORD shall return his blood

The Lord GOD. These words thus printed represent 'the Lord Jehovah.' (See note on i. 29.)

Abiathar had accompanied David during the time of Saul's persecutions (1 Sam. xxii. 23.)

²⁷ When Eli failed to correct his sons Hophni and Phinehas, a man of God was sent to say that his family should be removed from the High Priesthood. (1 Sam. ii. 27-36.) Abiathar was the great-grandson of Phinehas, and a descendant of Aaron's fourth son, Ithamar. Zadok, who now replaced him, was a descendant of Aaron's third son, Eleazar, and therefore not of Eli's branch of the priestly family.

Shiloh, in Ephraim, was the seat of the Ark and the Tabernacle, till the Ark was captured by the Philistines (1 Sam. iv. 11), and the Tabernacle also removed elsewhere—finally to Gibeon. (See next note.)

²⁸ The Tabernacle was now at Gibeon, in the territory of Benjamin. (See note on iii. 4.) This was the very place where Joab had murdered Amasa, and now he met his own fate there.

³¹ In Exodus (xxi. 14) it is enacted that the wilful murderer shall be taken even from God's altar to die.

Solomon. upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah. ³³ Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD. ³⁴ So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness.

³⁵ And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar.

³⁶ And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. ³⁷ For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head. ³⁸ And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

³⁹ And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei,

³² For Abner and Amasa see notes on *v.* 5.

³⁷ *Kidron*, the brook in the valley on the east of Jerusalem between the city and the Mount of Olives. Gethsemane was close to it and beyond it (*John* xviii. 1); so that Shimei was almost confined to the city, for he was not allowed to go any greater distance in other directions (*v.* 42).

³⁹ *Gath* was one of the five chief Philistine towns, S.W. of Jerusalem.

Achish was probably the son, or grandson, of the Achish who had befriended David, more than forty years before. He was, no doubt, under the suzerainty of Solomon, as in India there are native princes who are partly independent of the British Government.

saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath. ⁴⁰ And Shimei Solomon. arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath. ⁴¹ And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again. ⁴² And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, That word that I have heard is good. ⁴³ Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with? ⁴⁴ The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head; ⁴⁵ And king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever. ⁴⁶ So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

III.

¹And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about. ²Only the people ^{2.} The wisdom of Solomon.

⁴⁵ Solomon considers that, by punishing the wicked, he is establishing his throne in righteousness. (See Prov. xxv. 5.)

III.

¹ *Pharaoh* is the Bible name for all kings of Egypt alike. Never before since the Exodus had the children of Israel been important enough to have political relations with a power of the grandeur of Egypt; and this was a great match for Solomon.

The city of David was part of Jerusalem. Here David was buried. (ii. 10.)

² *The high places.* They were well-known spots, used for religious observances from time immemorial. Men chose hills for worship as nearer heaven, and more open to the rays of the sun,

Solomon. sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days. ³And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

⁴And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. ⁵In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. ⁶And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. ⁸And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. ⁹Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may

which, if not itself divine, seemed at least an emblem of the divine. The law which we find in Deuteronomy, that the Israelites were to offer sacrifices in only one spot chosen of God, was not observed in early days; and we find many instances in which men like Gideon and Samuel offered sacrifices at high places. The compiler, who in *vv.* 2 and 3 blames Solomon and the people, lived at a far later date, when this law was in force.

⁴ *Gibeon*, in Benjamin, the place whose inhabitants, by deceit, persuaded Joshua to make a treaty with them. (*Josh.* xviii. 21-25.) Important now because the Tabernacle of Moses remained here, though the Ark was in Jerusalem. (See note on ii. 28.)

Here, and in *v.* 15, Solomon seems to have offered sacrifices himself; so did David (2 *Sam.* vi. 17; 1 *Chron.* xxi. 26); another instance of the stricter laws of the Pentateuch not being at this period in force. (Cf. also ix. 25.)

⁷ Solomon is thought to have been between seventeen and twenty-two. Cf. William Pitt, who became Prime Minister at twenty-four, and was called the boy-minister.

To go out and come in is a proverbial phrase, common in the Old Testament; cf. also John x. 9.

discern between good and bad : for who is able to judge Solomon. this thy so great a people ? ¹⁰ And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. ¹¹ And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life ; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies ; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment ; ¹² behold, I have done according to thy words : lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart ; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. ¹³ And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour : so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. ¹⁴ And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. ¹⁵ And Solomon awoke ; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

¹⁶ Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. ¹⁷ And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house ; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. ¹⁸ And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also : and we were together ; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. ¹⁹ And this woman's child died in the night ; because she overlaid it. ²⁰ And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. ²¹ And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead : but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear. ²² And the other woman

15 On *burnt offerings* and *peace offerings*, see notes on viii. 63, 64.

19 *Overlaid*, *i.e.* turned over in bed when asleep, so as to smother the child.

Solomon. said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king. ²³Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living. ²⁴And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. ²⁵And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. ²⁶Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. ²⁷Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof. ²⁸And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

IV.

3. Court of
Solomon.

¹So king Solomon was king over all Israel. ²And these were the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest, ³Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder. ⁴And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host:

²⁷ The king thoughtfully repeats the mother's words: "Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it"; and then, seeing what they imply, gives his decision: "She" (who says this) "is the mother."

IV.

³ *Scribes*—secretaries, originally merely to write letters, etc. Such an office being necessarily a confidential one, Secretary readily becomes a high title, as in England Secretary of State. The scribes in our Lord's time were quite different, their profession being to study the Law of Moses and expound it.

The recorder's duty was to chronicle events, statistics, and the like. Much of 1 Kings is derived, directly or indirectly, from the recorder's chronicles.

and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests: ⁵and Azariah Solomon. the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend: ⁶and Ahishar was over the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute.

⁷And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision. ⁸And these are their names: The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim: ⁹the son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Bethshemesh, and Elon-beth-hanan: ¹⁰the son of Hesed, in Aruboth; to him pertained Sochoh, and all the land of Hopher: ¹¹the son of Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife: ¹²Baana the son of Abilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam: ¹³the son of Geber, in Ramoth-Gilead; to him pertained the towns of

5 Is this Nathan the prophet? or is it Solomon's brother? (2 Sam. v. 14; Luke iii. 31.)

The officers, i.e. such as those in v. 7.

Principal officer—Heb. priest. Men who were not of the family of Aaron were at this period sometimes called priests, though whether they really offered sacrifice is disputed. David, however, and Solomon did so. (iii. 4, 15.)

The king's friend means chief counsellor. Cf. Hushai, David's friend. (2 Sam. xv. 37.)

6 *The tribute* means the levy of chapter v. 13, that is, the forced labour. Adoniram (or Adoram) held this office under David, outlived Solomon, and was stoned by the rebels at the time of the revolt against Rehoboam. (xii. 18.)

8 *Mount Ephraim*, R. V. the hill country of Ephraim: not a single mountain, but the fertile uplands in the centre of Palestine.

8-19 It is to be noticed that these requisitions for the royal household are not exacted from Judah, though three of the districts (v. 9, 10, 18) were on the outskirts of Judah, and probably fell within the southern kingdom; six were in the north, and three to the east of Jordan.

We may notice that two of the officers married daughters of Solomon; further, that Ahimaaz (v. 15) may have been the son of Zadok, the high priest (2 Sam. xv. 27, foll.; xviii. 19, foll.); that Hushai (v. 16), Baanah's father, was David's 'friend.' (2 Sam. xv. 37.)

Solomon.

Jair the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead; to him also pertained the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brasen bars: ¹⁴Ahina-dab the son of Iddo had Mahanaim: ¹⁵Ahimaaz was in Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife: ¹⁶Baanah the son of Hushai was in Asher and in Aloth: ¹⁷Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar: ¹⁸Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin: ¹⁹Geber the son of Uri was in the country of Gilead, in the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and he was the only officer which was in the land.

²⁰Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry. ²¹And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. ²²And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ²³ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl. ²⁴For he had dominion over all the region on this side the River, from Tiphseh even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the River: and he had peace on all sides

¹⁹ The last sentence is probably meant to draw attention to its being a large district for a single officer.

²¹ *The River*, i.e. Euphrates.

These were dependent kingdoms over which Solomon was suzerain. There are many such in British India. With Oriental politeness, compulsory tribute is called a present; so again in x. 25. Solomon thus held a position almost like that of the kings of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia in later times.

²² The number of persons thus supported has been estimated at 15,000.

²⁴ *Tiphseh*—Thapsacus, on the Euphrates, where one of the great trade routes between Syria and Mesopotamia crossed the river by a ford. *Azzah*—Gaza, the Philistine city.

The Heb. is literally not on *this* side, but *beyond* the River, a phrase only natural in the mouth of one who lived east of the Euphrates. It is therefore probable that the compiler of the book was one of the captives in Babylonia.

Peace—the name Solomon means peaceful. (See viii. 56; 1 Chron. xxii. 9.) It is from the same root as Salem. (See Heb. vii. 2.)

round about him. ²⁵ And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, **Solomon.** every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon. ²⁶ And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. ²⁷ And those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing. ²⁸ Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge.

²⁹ And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. ³⁰ And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹ For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. ³² And

²⁵ *From Dan even to Beer-sheba, from North to South.*

²⁶ In 2 Chronicles ix. 25 the number is 4000, which is more likely to be right than 40,000. The prohibition of horses in Deuteronomy xvii. 16, like the law that they should only have one central sanctuary (see note on iii. 2), was either not yet formulated, or simply ignored. Solomon is here praised, not blamed.

²⁸ *Dromedaries, R.V. swift steeds.*

²⁹ *Largeness of heart, that is, width of sympathy and interest, like that of the famous saying, "Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto"; or Bacon's, "I have taken all knowledge for my province." (See vv. 32, 33.)*

The Books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Wisdom, even though they were not written by Solomon, bear witness to the tradition of his manifold wisdom. This tradition lived on among the Arabians. (See the *Koran* and the *Arabian Nights*.)

³⁰ The two most advanced civilizations of early times were those of Chaldea and Egypt. The inhabitants of those countries practised writing, and were advanced in astronomy, in geometry, and in engineering, long before the days of Solomon. And for centuries afterwards Babylon and Egypt were proverbial for learning of various kinds. (*e.g.* Matt. ii. 1; Acts vii. 22.)

³¹ Nothing for certain is known about these wise men.

³² The Heb. word translated *proverb* rather means a comparison, such as "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance

Solomon. he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. ³³And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. ³⁴And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

v.

4. The
league with
Hiram.

¹And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David. ²And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, ³Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. ⁴But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent. ⁵And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will of his friend " (Prov. xxvii. 17.) Ch. xx. 11 is another instance. No doubt the Book of Proverbs contains many of Solomon's sayings. Probably none of his songs have come down to us, though the headings of Psalms lxxii. and cxxvii. attribute them to him. The Song of Songs is probably not by Solomon, though its subject is his love for the Shulamite. A book called the Psalms of Solomon (not in the Canon, or the Apocrypha) has no claim to be considered his.

v.

1 *Tyre*, the Phoenician seaport town to the north of Palestine, was the great trading capital of the Mediterranean. Merchant ships from Tyre sailed as far as Spain, and even out into the ocean. Carthage was founded by the Phoenicians, and they also had settlements in Spain and elsewhere. They taught the Greeks the use of the alphabet, etc.; and at a later date fought with them frequently for the trade of the Mediterranean. Tyre was thus a great naval and mercantile power, like Venice in the Middle Ages, and England now; but she never had much land in her possession.

3 God forbade David to build the Temple, because of his wars. (1 Chron. xxii. 8; xxviii. 3.)

4 *Occurrent* is a substantive; we should now say occurrence.

5 See 2 Samuel vii. 12, 13.

set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name. ⁶Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.

⁷And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people. ⁸And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir. ⁹My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household. ¹⁰So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire. ¹¹And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year. ¹²And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together.

¹³And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel;

⁶ Sidon was within twenty miles of Tyre; the two were generally under the same government. The artistic skill of the Sidonians is celebrated in Homer and Virgil, etc.

Can skill—are skilful, in modern English.

⁷ *Hiram* did not worship Jehovah himself, but he believed Him to be the national God of the Israelites.

⁹ *In floats*, R. V. "I will make them into rafts to go by sea . . . and will cause them to be broken up there."

¹³ Such forced labour has often been exacted by kings, *e.g.* in France, before the Revolution (the *corvée*); and in Egypt, till the British occupation of the country. It probably became very unpopular in Israel, as elsewhere. (See xii. 4-18; cf. also 1 Sam. viii. 16.) It is likely that Israel here means the northern tribes, exclusive of Judah. (See note on iv. 8-19.)

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and the levy was thirty thousand men. ¹⁴And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy. ¹⁵And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains; ¹⁶beside the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work. ¹⁷And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. ¹⁸And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

VI.

5. The Temple.

¹And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD. ²And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty

¹⁴ *Adoniram*. See iv. 6; xii. 18.

^{15, 16} These were not Israelites, but aliens; forced to labour, not by courses, but always. (See ix. 20, 21; 2 Chron. ii. 2, 17, 18.)

¹⁸ For *the stonesquarers*, the margin of A.V. and the R.V. have the Gebalites, men of Gebal, or Byblos, a Phoenician city, north of Sidon. (Cf. Ezek. xxvii. 9, where 'the ancients of Gebal' are mentioned among the shipwrights of Tyre.)

VI.

¹ The Septuagint here has the 440th year, and neither number exactly tallies with the figures in Judges and Samuel. Thus the chronology of the earlier parts of the Old Testament is very uncertain. We cannot even fix the date of the accession of Solomon, much less that of the Exodus.

² The length, breadth, and height of the Temple (*i. e.* of the roofed building) were each exactly double those of the Tabernacle.

We may take a cubit as eighteen inches. The House was therefore not a large building; but it was only meant for the priests to enter. The congregation stood outside in the open courts. (Cf. Luke i. 21, 22.)

cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits. ³And the Solomon. porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house. ⁴And for the house he made windows of narrow lights. ⁵And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the oracle: and he made chambers round about: ⁶the nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad: for without in the wall of the house he made narrowed rests round about, that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house.

⁷And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron

³ The length of the porch is naturally the same thing as the breadth of the main building. The heights of both were probably also the same (this being possibly the true meaning of 2 Chronicles iii. 4). Others think there was a sort of tower, 180 feet high, at the main entrance, as at Kettering; or a pair of towers, like those of Westminster Abbey. Solomon's porch in the New Testament was a much later building, so named in honour of Solomon.

⁴ R. V. "Windows of fixed lattice work." The technical meaning of the Hebrew words is quite uncertain. Some think the windows had wooden boards, sloping one over the other, like those in a Venetian blind. Anyhow, the windows were rather for ventilation than for light, as candles were always kept burning in the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies was absolutely dark.

⁵ *The oracle*, or speaking-place, means the Holy of Holies; it was called the oracle because there God revealed Himself, as a man reveals himself by the words he speaks. For a similar reason (among others) the Son of God, by whom the Father reveals Himself (Matt. xi. 27), is called the Word in John i. 1.

The chambers were probably used for storing Temple furniture, etc.

⁶ The wall of the Temple must have been three feet thicker at the bottom than at the top, so as to allow of the two ledges (narrowed rests, R. V. rebatements), on which the floor-beams of the first and second floors rested.

⁷ The motive for thus avoiding noise was reverence, as when we lower our voices in a church.

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heard in the house, while it was in building. ⁸The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third. ⁹So he built the house, and finished it; and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar. ¹⁰And then he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar.

¹¹And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying, ¹²Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father: ¹³and I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel. ¹⁴So Solomon built the house, and finished it.

¹⁵And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir. ¹⁶And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built them for it within, even for the oracle, even for the most holy place. ¹⁷And the house, that is, the temple before it, was forty cubits long. ¹⁸And the

⁸ *Middle chamber* means the side-chambers on the first floor. (*v.* 6.) Neither these, nor those above them, had openings into the Holy Place, but were entered from outside. Whether this was so with the chambers on the ground floor is not known.

⁹ *Covered* means roofed.

¹⁰ The floors of the chambers rested on great beams of cedar.

¹¹⁻¹³ God, who dwelleth not in temples made with hands, will use Solomon's building as a means by which He will draw near to the people, and they to Him, on condition that they are obedient and righteous. Centuries later, when they professed to be religious without being moral, He suffered the Temple to be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. (*Jer.* vii.)

¹⁵ *i.e.* from the floor of the house to the beams of the ceiling.

¹⁶ The verse means that he made a partition twenty cubits from the wall farthest from the porch, and so shut off the Holy of Holies.

^{17, 18} refer to the Holy Place. *It* (*v.* 17) means the oracle. *Knops*—knobs, perhaps the Heb. word implies that they were shaped like gourds.

cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers: all was cedar; there was no stone seen. Solomon.

¹⁹And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord. ²⁰And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar. ²¹So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold. ²²And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold.

²³And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high. ²⁴And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits. ²⁵And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size. ²⁶The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub. ²⁷And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cheru-

²⁰ The Heb. is probably corrupt, and it is better to read with the Septuagint: "And the oracle was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof; and he made an altar before the oracle, and overlaid it with gold."

²¹ The first sentence refers to the Holy Place, and the last to the oracle, or Holy of Holies. And *v.* 22 sums up both.

²² *i.e.* the Altar of Incense, which stood in the Holy Place, close up to the Holy of Holies.

²³ Properly the singular is cherub, the plural cherubim, while 'cherubims' is a mere blunder. No one knows for certain what these figures really were; perhaps half-human, half-animal, like the great Assyrian bulls in the British Museum, which also have long wings. Sometimes the cherubim are said to form the throne on which God is seated (*e.g.* Ezek. x. 20; Ps. xcix. 1). They were symbols meant to suggest the power and majesty of God.

²⁷ Over the Ark Moses set two cherubim, looking inwards, face to face. (Ex. xxv. 18-20.) But in Solomon's Temple both looked the same way, their inner wings meeting above the Ark, their outer wings touching the wall.

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bims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. ²⁸And he overlaid the cherubims with gold. ²⁹And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without. ³⁰And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without.

³¹And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree: the lintel and side posts were a fifth part of the wall. ³²The two doors also were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees. ³³So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth part of the wall. ³⁴And the two doors were of fir tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. ³⁵And he carved thereon cherubims and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work.

³⁶And he built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams.

³⁷In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif: ³⁸and in the eleventh

^{29, 30} *Within and without, i.e.* in the inner and outer divisions of the Temple—the Holy of Holies, and the Holy Place.

³¹ *The lintel and side posts* here stand for the whole doorway.

³⁴ Each door consisted of leaves, which could be folded back, one on the other.

³⁶ This is the Court of the Priests, in which stood the Altar of burnt-offering, and the sea, and in which most of the sacrifices were presented. In the centre of the court stood the House, of which the Holy Place was only entered twice a day for the offering of incense, and the Holy of Holies only once a year, on the Day of Atonement. Outside the Court of the Priests was the outer court, where the people stood and watched the priests sacrificing in the inner court. Both outer and inner courts were open to the sky. The verse seems to mean that the inner court was raised four steps above the outer; and vii. 12 implies that the Temple, with its porch, stood again four steps above the inner court.

year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was Solomon the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.

VII.

¹But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house. 6. The Palace.

²He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof was an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars. ³And it was covered with cedar above upon the beams, that lay on forty five pillars, fifteen in a row. ⁴And there were windows in three rows, and light was against light in three ranks. ⁵And all the doors and posts were square, with the windows: and light was against light in three ranks.

⁶And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: and the porch was before them: and the other pillars and the thick beam were before them.

⁷Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, even the porch of judgment: and it was covered with cedar from one side of the floor to the other.

⁸And his house where he dwelt had another court within the porch, which was of the like work. Solomon made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife, like unto this porch.

⁹All these were of costly stones, according to the measure of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and

VII.

² Probably so called because made of cedar, with a perfect forest of pillars. It was used as an armoury, or treasure-house (x. 17).

⁴ There were three stories, and window was placed above window.

⁶ Before the porch of pillars was another porch with pillars of its own and (probably) a step (or threshold, R. V.; thick beam, A. V.) separating the two.

⁷ Yet a third porch, the porch of the throne, perhaps leading to the dwelling apartments.

⁹ Not what we call 'precious stones,' but marble or the like. R. V. even of hewn stone, according to measure. So again in v. 11.

Solomon. without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and so on the outside toward the great court. ¹⁰And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits. ¹¹And above were costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones and cedars. ¹²And the great court round about was with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the house of the LORD, and for the porch of the house.

7. The
brass-work
in the
Temple. ¹³And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. ¹⁴He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.

¹⁵For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about. ¹⁶And he made two chapiters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapter was five cubits, and the height of the other chapter was five cubits: ¹⁷and nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapter, and seven for the other chapter. ¹⁸And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter. ¹⁹And the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work, in the porch, four cubits. ²⁰And the chapiters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round

¹² For *both*, read "like as" (R.V.). See note on vi. 36. *The house* means the Temple.

¹³ A different person from Hiram, the king of Tyre. (v. 1.)

¹⁶ *Chapiters*, *i.e.* capitals.

²⁰ *Belly*, *i.e.* the bulging part of the capital. The capitals were apparently very much higher in proportion than any we are accustomed to in Greek or Gothic architecture. It is not clear what was the exact arrangement of the network, etc.

about upon the other chapter. ²¹And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz. ²²And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished. Solomon.

²³And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about. ²⁴And under the brim of it round about there were knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the knops were cast in two rows, when it was cast. ²⁵It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward. ²⁶And it was an hand breadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained two thousand baths.

²⁷And he made ten bases of brass; four cubits was the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof, and three cubits the height of it. ²⁸And the work of the bases was on this manner: they had borders, and the borders were between the ledges: ²⁹and on the borders that were between the ledges were lions, oxen, and cherubims: and upon the ledges there was a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen were certain additions made

²¹ *Jachin* means, He will establish. *Boaz*, In it (or in Him) is strength. The pillars and the sea were broken up when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. (2 Kings xxv. 13.)

²³ This great bath was for the priests to wash in, when the ritual of worship prescribed it. (2 Chron. iv. 6; cf. Ex. xxx. 17-21.)

²⁶ "Like the flower of a lily" (R. V.), *i.e.* curving, or drooping downwards. *Bath* is a Hebrew measure, equal to about 4 gallons.

²⁷ The bases were moved on wheels, and carried lavers, or basins, enclosed in ornamental framework of panels; for this is probably what the 'borders' were. They were used for washing certain parts of the sacrificial victims. (Cf. Lev. i. 9; 2 Chron. iv. 6.)

²⁹ *Certain additions made of thin work*, R. V., "Wreaths of hanging work." *Base*, R. V. pedestal (and again in v. 31). The Heb. word is different from that in vv. 27, 28, 30, 32.

Solomon.

of thin work. ³⁰And every base had four brasen wheels, and plates of brass: and the four corners thereof had undersettors: under the laver were undersettors molten, at the side of every addition. ³¹And the mouth of it within the chapter and above was a cubit: but the mouth thereof was round after the work of the base, a cubit and an half: and also upon the mouth of it were gravings with their borders, foursquare, not round. ³²And under the borders were four wheels; and the axletrees of the wheels were joined to the base: and the height of a wheel was a cubit and half a cubit. ³³And the work of the wheels was like the work of a chariot wheel: their axletrees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, were all molten. ³⁴And there were four undersettors to the four corners of one base: and the undersettors were of the very base itself. ³⁵And in the top of the base was there a round compass of half a cubit high: and on the top of the base the ledges thereof and the borders thereof were of the same. ³⁶For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he graved cherubims, lions, and palm trees, according to the proportion of every one, and additions round about. ³⁷After this manner he made the ten bases: all of them had one casting, one measure, and one size. ³⁸Then made he ten lavers of brass: one laver contained forty baths: and every laver was four cubits: and upon every one of the ten bases one laver. ³⁹And he put five bases on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house: and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward over against the south.

³⁰ *Plates*, R V. *axles*. *Undersettors* means pedestals; but the Hebrew word means 'shoulders,' *i.e.* apparently brackets.

³¹ Apparently the chapter was wider at the top, where its opening was a cubit and a half across, than where it fitted into a hole, or 'mouth,' in the base, which was only a cubit across.

³⁵ *Compass* seems to mean a drum-shaped framework, to hold the laver, or basin; perhaps the 'compass' is the same as the 'chapter' of v. 31.

³⁹ All these vessels were in the Court of the Priests, outside the Temple itself.

⁴⁰And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basons. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made king Solomon for the house of the LORD: ⁴¹the two pillars, and the two bowls of the chapiters that were on the top of the two pillars; and the two networks, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars; ⁴²and four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, even two rows of pomegranates for one network, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that were upon the pillars; ⁴³and the ten bases, and ten lavers on the bases; ⁴⁴and one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea; ⁴⁵and the pots, and the shovels, and the basons: and all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the LORD, were of bright brass. ⁴⁶In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan. ⁴⁷And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass found out.

⁴⁸And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the LORD: the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the shewbread was, ⁴⁹and the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold, ⁵⁰and the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, to wit, of the temple.

⁴⁶ *Succoth* was down in a low-lying district, on the east bank of Jordan, in the territory of Gad.

Zarthan, or *Zarethan*, is also mentioned in Joshua iii. 16, as on the banks of Jordan.

⁴⁹ In Exodus xxv. 31 foll. we hear of a single seven-branched candlestick. And in Zerubbabel's Temple such a candlestick was a prominent feature; and it appears on the Arch of Titus, among the spoils carried away at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. But in this passage we have ten several candlesticks. The Holy Place was probably only illuminated by artificial light, and the Holy of Holies was entirely dark.

Solomon. ⁵¹So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the LORD. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the LORD.

VIII.

8. The
Dedication
of the
Temple.

¹Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. ²And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast, in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. ³And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. ⁴And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up. ⁵And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude. ⁶And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. ⁷For the cherubims spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

VIII.

² The Feast of Tabernacles, the most joyous of all the feasts, began on the 15th day of the 7th month; and Solomon dedicated the Temple on the 8th day of the month, thus providing fourteen days' continuous feasting (*v.* 65).

⁴ *Tabernacle of the congregation*, better as R.V., "Tent of meeting." It had its name, not because the people assembled there (indeed, none but Moses and the priests entered the Tent), but because there God *met* His people through their appointed representatives.

It is probable that the hangings, etc., of the Tent were stored away in the side chambers of the Temple.

⁸And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves **Solomon.** were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day. ⁹There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁰And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, ¹¹so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD. ¹²Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. ¹³I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever. ¹⁴And the king turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel: (and all the congre-

8 *The staves were so long* (R.V.), that their ends were seen by the priests when in the Holy Place; but the people outside, who could only see through the open doors into the Holy Place, could not see the staves. How it came that they protruded into the Holy Place is not known.

Unto this day. As the Ark disappeared when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple, this passage must have been written before that date, and the compiler of the Book of Kings have copied it unaltered. The Septuagint, however, omits the words.

9 The golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, may have been laid on the floor before the Ark. They are said in Exodus to have been laid up "before the Testimony," *i.e.* the two tables of stone. But the later Jewish tradition held that at one time they also were kept inside the Ark (Heb. ix. 4). Perhaps this was during the days of the wanderings in the wilderness. Or they may have been lost by Solomon's time.

10 *The cloud*, that is the traditional token of God's presence. (See Ex. xiii. 21; xxxiii. 9-11; xl. 34-38; Num. ix. 15-23.)

11 *Minister*, *i.e.* at the Altar of Incense, within the Holy Place.

12, 13 Solomon means that the cloud proves that God has accepted his work in building the Temple. Of course, neither Temple, nor gold, nor ornament, nor sacrifice can please God in themselves; but He deigned, and still deigns, to accept such things as the best men can give. While we are imperfect, He puts up with imperfect offerings from us.

14 *Blessed*. Following Hebrew and Greek, we use the word bless in two senses: (a) to express thanks and worship towards

Solomon. gation of Israel stood;) ¹⁵and he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it, saying, ¹⁶Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that my name might be therein; but I chose David to be over my people Israel. ¹⁷And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. ¹⁸And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. ¹⁹Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name. ²⁰And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built an house for the name of the LORD God of

God, when we 'bless' Him for being what He is—faithful, merciful, and the like; (*b*) in prayer, when we call upon God to 'bless' him for whom we are interceding. In this second sense the blessing, when given by one in authority, is the means of conveying some benefit from God; so that Jacob can steal Esau's blessing. In this verse 'bless' is used in sense (*b*); but we are not given the substance of the prayer. Perhaps Solomon only raised his hands with the usual gesture of blessing, as in *vv.* 57-61. In *v.* 15 'bless' has sense (*a*).

¹⁵ *Mouth* and *hand*, in the strict sense of the words, do not apply to God, who is spirit without body. But men have no 'heavenly' language by which to speak of God as He really is; and therefore must fall back on the language of daily life, as is constantly done throughout the Bible. If *vv.* 15 and 24 speak of God as almost like a man, *v.* 27 corrects the error, and so do many other passages.

Solomon refers to the message sent to David in 2 Samuel vii. 5 foll.

¹⁶ The tabernacle had been moved from place to place, and was not a solid *house* in a city.

My name. In Old Testament language God's Name often means His *revelation* of Himself. His Name was to be in the Temple, because there He would reveal His character as righteous, ready to forgive, delighting in man's approach to Him through worship and sacrifice. We still often use 'name' for 'character,' and this is something like the Bible use of the word.

Israel. ²¹ And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein Solomon. is the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

²² And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven : ²³ and he said, LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart : ²⁴ who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him : thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day. ²⁵ Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel ; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. ²⁶ And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father. ²⁷ But will God indeed dwell on the earth ? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ; how much less this house that I have builded ? ²⁸ Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day : ²⁹ that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there : that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. ³⁰ And

21 The ten commandments written on the two tables were the essence of the covenant.

22 *The altar, i.e.* of burnt-offering. 2 Chronicles vi. 13 tells us of a raised scaffold, such that Solomon could be seen by all the congregation.

For an analysis of this prayer see p. 100.

25 *So that* means 'if only.'

27 Cf. Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2 ; Acts vii. 48.

30 It was (and is) the custom of Israelites, when praying, to look towards Jerusalem. (See Dan. vi. 10 ; Jonah ii. 4 ; Ps. v. 7.) So the Mahommedans pray towards Mecca.

Solomon.

harken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.

³¹If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house: ³²then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.

³³When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house: ³⁴then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.

³⁵When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them: ³⁶then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

31 *And the oath come*; R.V. "and he come and swear."

34 It is assumed that the people, when defeated, would be forced to migrate into a foreign land, as was the case in the so-called "Captivities."

36 *That Thou teach them*; R.V. "when (or because) Thou teachest them." The meaning of the verse is that God chastises in order to teach His people; therefore, when they have learnt the lesson, and turn from their sin, He will naturally cease to chastise. Solomon does not go on to say, what is also true, that even after we have been forgiven we may still need to be punished; God often forgives us, before we have wholly learnt the lesson; and we may still have to be cured by chastisement of the tendency to slip back into the old sin. Besides, punishment has other aspects, as well as the cure of the offender. So that it is by no means the rule that, as soon as a man repents, he is relieved of his punishment.

³⁷If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, Solomon. blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; ³⁸what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: ³⁹then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;) ⁴⁰that they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

⁴¹Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; ⁴²(for they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house; ⁴³hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.

⁴⁴If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for thy name: ⁴⁵then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

⁴⁶If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that

³⁸ *Plague of his own heart*—the punishment laid upon him.

⁴¹ From time to time the most enlightened men in Israel realized the truth that God had chosen the nation, His 'elect,' not so much for their own sakes, as that through them *all* the nations of the earth might be blessed. So here Solomon prays for the Gentiles, who shall be brought to the knowledge of the true God.

⁴³ *Is called by Thy name*—more literally, 'that Thy name is called upon this house,' *i.e.* 'that Thou hast adopted it as Thine own, and deignest to reveal Thyself there.'

Solomon. sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; ⁴⁷yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; ⁴⁸and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: ⁴⁹then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, ⁵⁰and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them: ⁵¹for they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron: ⁵²that thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee. ⁵³For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God.

⁵⁴And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. ⁵⁵And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with

⁵¹ *Furnace of iron, i.e.* a furnace hot enough to smelt iron.

⁵³ *By the hand of* is the Hebrew idiom for 'by.' So again in v. 56.

⁵⁴ After uttering the above prayer standing (v. 22), Solomon knelt in silence, and then rose again.

a loud voice, saying, ⁵⁶Blessed be the LORD, that hath Solomon. given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. ⁵⁷The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us: ⁵⁸that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers. ⁵⁹And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require: ⁶⁰that all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else. ⁶¹Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.

⁶²And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD. ⁶³And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of

⁵⁶ During the frequent wars of Saul and David, so great a work as the Temple could not have been carried out. But Solomon, whose name means Peaceful, was able to effect great advances in architecture, and the peaceful arts of civilization. (See 1 Chron. xxii. 8, 9.)

⁵⁹ *As the matter shall require.* Heb. 'the thing of a day in its day,' i.e. as occasion may arise. (Cf. Ex. xvi. 4, Matt. vi. 34.)

⁶³ In the *peace offering*, part of the victim (the fat, v. 64) was burnt on God's altar, part eaten by the priest; but most of it was eaten by the offerer and his family—and the idea of the sacrifice was peace with God. As the centre of family life is the common meal, so in the peace offering man brought his food to eat it in the precincts of God's house. It was, therefore, a joyful sacrifice, with none of the ideas of self-denial that we unfortunately regard as essential to the word 'sacrifice.' (Cf. iii. 15.) The king provided this vast number of beasts, that all who came might have their share in this hallowed feast of rejoicing and peace. It has been calculated that the amount would feed half a million people for the fortnight.

Solomon.

Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. ⁶⁴The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings: because the brasen altar that was before the LORD was too little to receive the burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings. ⁶⁵And at that time Solomon held a feast and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven days, even fourteen days. ⁶⁶On the eighth day he sent the people away: and they

64 The regular altar being too small, the whole fore-part of the Court of the Priests was treated as an extension of the altar.

In the *burnt offering* the victim was consumed *entirely* on God's altar, and the idea of the sacrifice was whole-hearted devotion to God. The daily sacrifice, offered morning and evening (xviii. 29), was a burnt offering, together with a meal-offering.

In the *meat offering* there was no 'meat' in our sense of the word; for the sacrifice consisted of flour or cakes. (Formerly the word 'meat' meant anything to eat, as in sweet-meat. In the R.V. these sacrifices are called meal offerings.) The chief idea in this sacrifice seems to have been that of a present to God and His service; part of the offering was burnt, part given to the priests, and the offerer had no share in it.

It is to be noticed that no mention is made here of sin or trespass offerings. Perhaps the sacrifices of *v. 5* were of this nature; for the *sin offering*, which meant the confession of guilt and prayer for forgiveness, always preceded the peace offering.

65 R.V. "the feast"; that is, the Feast of Tabernacles—the feast *par excellence*. The Dedication Festival lasted a week, and was immediately followed by *the Feast*. (2 Chron. vii. 9.)

Hamath—a town and kingdom far in the north, on the Orontes, on which river Antioch was afterwards built. Toi, king of Hamath, made alliance with David (2 Sam. viii. 10), and gave him presents or tribute. Here it seems to be spoken of as beyond the limits of Solomon's kingdom; but it must be included among the subject kingdoms of chapter iv. 24. *The entering in of Hamath* is the regular name for the mountain pass leading to it.

The river of Egypt means not the Nile, but a brook or torrent, 'wady,' which formed the eastern boundary of Egypt.

66 *Eighth day* of the Feast of Tabernacles, the twenty-third of the month. (2 Chron. vii. 10.)

Tents, i.e. homes; the Israelites had not long given up tents, and taken to living in houses.

blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people. Solomon.

IX.

¹And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, ²that the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. ³And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. ⁴And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: ⁵then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. ⁶But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes

9. God's covenant with Solomon.

IX.

² *Gibeon.* See iii. 4.

^{3, 4} This promise has a condition—obedience—attached to it, and it was the people's failure to fulfil the condition that led to God's permitting the first and second destructions of the Temple, and the overthrow of the house of David. Here the condition is made clear in what follows; but sometimes the condition is only implied. It was from forgetting the conditional character of God's promises that the Jews became hardened in self-complacent pride, from which prophets like Jeremiah and John the Baptist tried in vain to rouse them. (Jer. vii. 3-15; Matt. iii. 9.) In spite of their obstinacy, God on His side was always ready to fulfil the promise, if they would repent. (Rom. xi. 29.)

⁶ *At all* is a misleading translation of the Hebrew construction, which, though the infinitive and not the participle is used, we may represent by 'if turning ye shall turn.' (Cf. Gen. ii. 17, "dying ye shall die," *i.e.* ye shall surely die.) Thus the expression is emphatic, and means, "if ye shall deliberately and wholly turn."

Solomon.

which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: ⁷then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people: ⁸and at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house? ⁹And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil.

¹⁰And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house, ¹¹(Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. ¹²And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not. ¹³And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day. ¹⁴And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold.

¹⁵And this is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and

8 Perhaps—'And this house shall be high (*i.e.* set up as a spectacle), everyone,' etc.

11 *Galilee* borders on Phœnicia.

12 Hiram perhaps wished for a maritime, and not a mountainous district.

13 *Cabul* is not a Hebrew word, and its precise meaning is not known. Josephus guessed that it was the Phœnician for unpleasant. 2 Chronicles viii. 2 perhaps implies that Hiram refused to keep the unwelcome gift.

15 *The levy.* See v. 13.

Read *the Millo*—the name of what was probably a castle, or fort, on the walls of Jerusalem.

Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer were three fortresses. *Hazor* was

Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer. ¹⁶ For Pharaoh king of Solomon. Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife.

¹⁷ And Solomon built Gezer, and Beth-horon the nether. ¹⁸ And Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land, ¹⁹ and all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots and cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon and in all the land of his dominion.

²⁰ And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were in the far north of Palestine, commanding the approach from Hamath and Syria; it is mentioned in Joshua xi., Judges iv. 2.

Megiddo commands the valley of Jezreel, the chief battle-field of the country. Here Barak defeated Sisera (Jud. v. 19), Gideon the Midianites (Judges vi. 33), and the Egyptians Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 29); and Mount Gilboa, where Saul was defeated, overlooks the valley.

The site of *Gezer* is uncertain; *v.* 16 would suggest that it commanded the Egyptian frontier; but in *v.* 17 and Joshua xvi. 3, it is associated with Beth-horon, which belonged to Ephraim. (See below.)

¹⁶ Solomon may have obtained Pharaoh's aid in expelling the Canaanites who survived in Gezer, as did the Jebusites in Jerusalem till David took it. (2 Sam. v. 6.)

¹⁷ *Beth-horon*. There were (and are) two villages, the upper and the lower, on the chief road that leads up from the plains of Sharon and of the Philistines (the lowland, x. 27) into the uplands of Ephraim and Benjamin. This road was naturally the scene of important battles; here Joshua defeated the five kings (Josh. x. 10), and Judas Maccabeus the Syrians (1 Macc. iii. 16).

¹⁸ *Baalath* was on the Philistine border.

Tadmor—the important town situated on the shortest route between Palestine and Mesopotamia, which crossed the Euphrates at Tiphseh. (iv. 24.) Tadmor was afterwards famous as Palmyra. But there is uncertainty about the reading here, as the Hebrew text has Tamar, which is mentioned in Ezekiel xlvi. 19 as a border town in the south. But in the margin of the Hebrew text stands the direction, "Read Tadmor"; and this represents a very old tradition, which is confirmed by 2 Chronicles viii. 4, the Septuagint, and other versions. On the other hand, "in the land" can hardly apply to Tadmor, which is 100 miles beyond Damascus, and far outside the natural borders of Palestine.

¹⁹ *Desired to build* for his pleasure, R. V.; like a country house.

Solomon.

not of the children of Israel, ²¹their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day. ²²But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen: but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen.

²³These were the chief of the officers that were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work.

²⁴But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David unto her house which Solomon had built for her: then did he build Millo.

²⁵And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the LORD, and he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the LORD. So he finished the house.

²⁶And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom. ²⁷And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. ²⁸And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.

21 The levy of v. 15 and v. 13 was of a different character from this; these Canaanites were the labourers of v. 15. Nevertheless, the Israelites groaned under the burden of their lighter service. (xii. 4-18.)

23 The catalogue of names is omitted for brevity.

24 See iii. 1, vii. 8; 2 Chronicles viii. 11.

25 *Three times a year, i.e.* at the three great feasts. (See 2 Chron. viii. 13.) He must have entered the Holy Place to burn the incense (see note on iii. 4).

So he finished the house. This sentence has clearly got shifted out of its place during the compilation of the book.

26 *Ezion-geber* (the Giant's spine) and *Eloth*, or *Elath*, were situated at the head of the gulf of Akabah, the eastern fork of the Red Sea. (Cf. xxii. 48.)

28 *Ophir* is still unknown; opinions are divided between some part of India, of Arabia, or of South Africa. Gold of Ophir was proverbial for its fineness.

X.

¹And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions. ²And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. ³And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not. ⁴And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, ⁵and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. ⁶And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. ⁷Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. ⁸Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. ⁹Blessed be the LORD thy God,

Solomon.
10. The
Queen of
Sheba.

X.

¹ *Sheba* is Arabia. It is distinct from Seba, or Saba, in Ethiopia. In Psalm lxxii. 10 both names occur, and Sheba is translated Arabia in the Prayer-book version.

Concerning the name of the Lord. The Septuagint, by the change of a single letter, reads, "*and the name of the Lord.*" The Hebrew seems to mean the glory Solomon had received *from* God's gracious dealings with him.

³ According to Arab and other traditions the questions were chiefly riddles and puzzles.

⁵ In modern English we should interchange *servants* and *ministers*; the ministers would sit at the banquet, and the servants stand (the Hebrew for attendance is literally 'standing') to wait upon them. After all, minister is only the Latin for servant.

Ascent—some cloister leading from the palace to the Temple. But the Hebrew here, and the Septuagint, both here and in 2 Chronicles ix. 4, have "his burnt offering which he offered in the house of the Lord." The difference in Hebrew is only that of a single letter (the yod, or jot, of Matt. v. 18); because to offer is literally to make to go up, *i.e.* to place, upon the altar.

Solomon.

which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice. ¹⁰And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon. ¹¹(And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones. ¹²And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day.) ¹³And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

11.
Solomon's
wealth.

¹⁴Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, ¹⁵beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country. ¹⁶And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target. ¹⁷And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three pound

¹¹ *The navy* called Hiram's, because he supplied the seamen. (ix. 27.)

Almug—spelt in 2 Chronicles ix. 10, 11, *algum*—perhaps sandal-wood.

¹² *Pillars*—in 2 Chronicles ix. 11, terraces—some ornamental work, perhaps a balustrade.

¹⁴ A talent probably weighed about 90 lbs. avoird., and would be worth in gold about £5000. A shekel was half an ounce, and a 'pound' probably 50 shekels. 3000 shekels made a 'talent.'

¹⁵ R. V. more correctly, "beside that which the chapmen brought, and the traffic of the merchants, and of all the kings of the mingled people, and of the governors of the country." 'Chapman,' the same word as the German 'Kaufmann,' means pedlar. There is no mention of spice in the Hebrew. 'The mingled people' means tribes of mixed descent, here those on the frontiers of Palestine.

^{16, 17} The *targets* and *shields* were only overlaid with gold; they were used for pageantry, not for war.

of gold went to one shield : and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon. Solomon.

¹⁸ Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. ¹⁹ The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind : and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays. ²⁰ And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps : there was not the like made in any kingdom.

²¹ And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold ; none were of silver : it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. ²² For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram : once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

²³ So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. ²⁴ And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. ²⁵ And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

²⁶ And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen : and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem. ²⁷ And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycomore trees that are in the vale, for abundance. ²⁸ And Solomon had horses

18 It is thought that the ivory was laid on in veneer.

22 *Tharshish* means Tartessus in Spain, with which the Phoenicians traded. But the phrase 'ships of Tharshish' means ships of the largest build suitable for such long voyages. Here the trade was clearly with India, as the list of wares shows.

25 Here again tribute is called a present. (Cf. iv. 21.)

26 See on iv. 26.

27 *The vale* is a mistranslation. It means the fertile *lowland* (so R. V.) between the high lands of Judah and the sea.

28 R. V. "And the horses which Solomon had were brought out of Egypt ; and the king's merchants received them in droves, each drove at a price."

Solomon brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. ²⁹And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means.

XI.

^{12.} Solomon's fall. ¹But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; ²of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. ³And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. ⁴For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his

²⁹ Solomon allowed the merchants to import horses for other kings, no doubt levying toll on the way. The horses fetched £18.

The Hittites were once a great nation. Traces of them are found in Cappadocia, Hamath (near Antioch), and Carchemish on the Euphrates; and they once fought with Assyria and with Egypt on equal terms. But by Solomon's time they had dwindled down to a few petty kingdoms, with Carchemish as their chief centre.

The kings of Syria (Aram) means another group of the petty kings, such as those mentioned in 2 Samuel x. 6; these tribes afterwards combined to form the powerful kingdom of Damascus.

XI.

¹ *Moab*, *Ammon*, and *Edom* were Semitic tribes akin to the Hebrews. All three dwelt on the east of Palestine—Moab opposite the southern part of the Dead Sea, Ammon north-east of Moab; both these bordered on the tribe of Reuben, and Ammon also on Gad; while Edom lay to the south of Moab, and hardly touched the Hebrews anywhere. All three were also subject to Solomon. For Zidon, see note on v. 6; on the Hittites, x. 29.

² See Exodus xxxiv. 11 foll. esp. 16. One or other of Solomon's parents had already broken the law—David, if Bath-sheba was a Hittite; Bath-sheba, if being a Jewess, she married Uriah the Hittite. The prohibition does not expressly mention Moab or Ammon; and Ruth, Solomon's ancestress, was a Moabitess.

³ The Great Mogul at Delhi is said to have had a thousand wives.

⁴ God never coerces men's freedom. Even God's gift of wisdom to Solomon did not prevent his falling into this folly.

wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. ⁵For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. ⁷Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. ⁸And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

⁹And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, ¹⁰and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. ¹¹Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. ¹²Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. ¹³Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

⁵ *Ashtoreth* (δ) was the partner of Baal. She was akin to the Greek Aphrodite, and her worship equally licentious.

Milcom is the same as Molech of *v.* 7, for both words only mean king. He was worshipped with human sacrifices, and especially by burning children in the sacred fire.

⁷ *High place.* See on iii. 2.

Chemosh (ϵ) was also propitiated by human sacrifices. (2 Kings iii. 27.)

The hill that is before Jerusalem probably means the Mount of Olives, over against the Temple. The hill a little further to the south has received the name Mount of Offence, because it was supposed to be the scene of these idolatrous worships.

¹², ¹³ afford an example of God's patience, correcting men, but with judgment, so as to give them time to repent.

Solomon.
13. His
enemies.

¹⁴And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom. ¹⁵For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male in Edom; ¹⁶(for six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom :) ¹⁷that Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad being yet a little child. ¹⁸And they arose out of Midian, and came to Paran: and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave him an house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him land. ¹⁹And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen. ²⁰And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh. ²¹And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country. ²²Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing: howbeit let me go in any wise.

¹⁴ The revolt of Edom is attributed to God, who sways the counsels of men. Hadad doubtless did not know that in seeking to recover his inheritance he was executing God's purposes.

Adversary. The Hebrew is the word we use as the proper name of the evil spirit—Satan.

¹⁵ For David's conquest of Edom, see 1 Chronicles xviii. 12, 13.

¹⁶ *All Israel, every male.* The words must not be pressed, they mean only those capable of fighting. 1 Chronicles xviii. 13 implies that the rest of the Edomites were left to pay tribute.

¹⁸ The Midianites were an Arabian tribe, and were chiefly nomad; but they also possessed cities (Num. xxxi. 10), which seem to have been near Moab (Num. xxii. 4), and so close to Edom.

Paran is the name of the wilderness to the south of Judah.

Pharaoh. It seems unlikely that this was Solomon's father-in-law; it was more probably his predecessor.

²³ And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon Solomon. the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah: ²⁴ and he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them of Zobah: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus. ²⁵ And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

²⁶ And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of 14. Rise of Jeroboam. Zerada, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king. ²⁷ And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father. ²⁸ And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph. ²⁹ And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad

²³ *Zobah* was in the north, between Damascus and Hamath. For David's conquest of this country, see 2 Samuel viii. 3-10.

²⁴ *Damascus*—a most beautiful city in a fertile plain, amidst parched and barren wastes; a trade centre, and famous in all ages. It is mentioned in the story of Abraham (Gen. xv. 2); was the capital of the kingdom of Syria, which pressed Israel so hardly; was destroyed by the Assyrians; but revived, and was famous under the Persians and the Greeks. St. Paul was converted on his way to Damascus. It often figures in later history and fiction, *e.g.* the *Arabian Nights*. It still has more than 100,000 inhabitants. The words 'damask' and 'damson' are both derived from its name.

²⁶ *Ephrathite* here means a member of the tribe of Ephraim.

²⁷ *Repaired the breaches*—lit. 'closed up the breach.' This may be a breach made at the siege of Jerusalem by David (2 Sam. v. 7), or the gap caused by the unevenness of the ground between the city of David and the rest of Jerusalem.

²⁸ *The charge of the house of Joseph* means the forced work laid upon the Ephraimites. It was impolitic to employ them thus to fortify Jerusalem in the tribe of Judah.

²⁹ *Ahijah*. See also xiv. 2-18. Ahijah wrote some sort of record of Solomon's reign (2 Chron. ix. 29), which was no doubt used by the compiler of 1 Kings.

Shilonite, i.e. of Shiloh, a city of Ephraim, during the time

Solomon.

himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: ³⁰and Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: ³¹and he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: ³²(but he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) ³³because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. ³⁴Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: ³⁵but I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. ³⁶And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. ³⁷And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shall be king over Israel. ³⁸And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be

of the Judges the centre (so far as there was a centre) of national life. Here were the Tabernacle and the Ark from Joshua till Eli. *He had clad, i.e.* Ahijah (R. V.).

³⁰ *Caught*, R. V. laid hold of. The prophets often enforced their meaning by symbolical acts. (Cf. xxii. 11.)

It is here implied that two tribes will be left to the house of David, though the next verse speaks only of one. (Cf. xii. 20, 21.) Benjamin was a very small tribe, and is sometimes treated as if merely a part of Judah.

³⁶ *A light*—a lamp burning in his house, the sign of life and peace. (Cf. Job xviii. 5, 6.)

³⁷ Jeroboam then was already ambitious of the kingdom.

with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, Solomon.
and will give Israel unto thee. ³⁹And I will for this afflict
the seed of David, but not for ever. ⁴⁰Solomon sought
therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled
into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in
Egypt until the death of Solomon.

⁴¹And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he 14. His
death.
did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of
the acts of Solomon? ⁴²And the time that Solomon
reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years.
⁴³And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in
the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son
reigned in his stead.

XII.

¹And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were Rehoboam.
1. The
Rebellion.
come to Shechem to make him king. ²And it came to
pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in
Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of

⁴⁰ *Shishak*, or Sheshonk—the first king of a new dynasty,
which replaced that of Solomon's father-in-law. (See further on
xiv. 25.)

⁴¹ *The book of the acts of Solomon*—the special record or
chronicle of his reign, kept by Jehoshaphat the Recorder. (iv. 3.)

XII.

¹ *Shechem* was the chief city in Ephraim, at the foot of Mount
Gerizim. Sychar (John iv. 5) was either the same place, or close
to it. It is now called Nabulus, and the survivors of the
Samaritans dwell there.

There had long been a distinction between Judah and the
northern tribes, who were in contrast called Israel. Thus on the
death of Saul the ten northern tribes would not forsake the
reigning house, but for some years Saul's son, Ish-bosheth, reigned
at Mahanaim, while David reigned over Judah at Hebron. Again,
after the defeat of Absalom, we find a rivalry between North and
South as to which should be foremost in bringing David back
to Zion. And out of this rivalry grew the revolt of Sheba, whose
party consisted of the northern tribes. Solomon's policy had
intensified the difference, as he exalted Jerusalem and Judah,
and subjected Ephraim and the rest to requisitions (see note on
iv. 8-19) and forced labour (xi. 28).

It seems likely that after Rehoboam had been crowned at
Jerusalem, there was to be some solemn recognition of the new
king by the northern half of his kingdom at Shechem.

2, 3 Better as in R. V., "(And Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt, and

Rehoboam king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) ³that they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying, ⁴Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee. ⁵And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

⁶And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? ⁷And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. ⁸But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him: ⁹and he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? ¹⁰And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. ¹¹And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

they sent and called him;) that Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came," etc.

4 Had Solomon not shown favouritism towards Judah, had he maintained the integrity of the empire against Hadad and Rezon, had he been less luxurious in his life and more faithful to the worship of God, it is probable that the nation would not have felt the taxation and the forced labour too heavy a price to pay for its peace, unity, and glory.

8 According to xiv. 21, Rehoboam was forty-one. The Septuagint, according to one text, makes him sixteen, which is much more likely.

¹²So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam Rehoboam. the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. ¹³And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; ¹⁴and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. ¹⁵Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat. ¹⁶So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. ¹⁷But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. ¹⁸Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. ¹⁹So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. ²⁰And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel:

¹⁵ *Cause*, lit. 'turn of events.' R.V., "It was a thing brought about of the Lord."

¹⁶ *To your tents, O Israel*. The same words were used in the revolt of Sheba. (2 Sam. xx. 1.) They mean, break up the assembly and go home; but they imply rebellion.

On *tents*, see note on viii. 66. *Thine own house*, i.e. the tribe of Judah.

¹⁷ *Israel* here, as throughout the chapter, means the northern tribes.

¹⁸ *Adoram* (iv. 6, v. 14) was the last person the king should have sent, as he was sure to be unpopular. He must have been very old by this time.

¹⁹ *Unto this day* shows that the document here used was written before the end of the northern kingdom.

²⁰ Probably those who sent for Jeroboam in v. 3 were the leading men; now the whole people proclaim him king.

Judah. there was none that followed the house of David, but
 Rehoboam. the tribe of Judah only.

²¹And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.

²²But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, ²³Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah. and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying, ²⁴Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.

Israel.
 Jeroboam.
 1. His
 idolatry.

²⁵Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel.

²⁶And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: ²⁷if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall

As in xi. 32, Benjamin is overlooked, only to be mentioned in the next verse.

²² *Shemaiah* (2 Chron. xii. 5-8) was again sent to Rehoboam at the time of Shishak's invasion. (See chap. xiv. 25.) He wrote a history of Rehoboam's reign, which was used by the compilers of Kings and Chronicles. (2 Chron. xii. 15.)

Man of God means one devoted to God's service, and so well fitted to be His spokesman or prophet. The phrase is used of many of the O.T. prophets, and is applied by St. Paul to the Christian clergy (1 Tim. vi. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 17).

²³ *The remnant*, see v. 17.

²⁴ We learn from chapter xiv. 30 that after all there was constant warfare between Jeroboam and Rehoboam.

²⁵ *Mount Ephraim*, the hill country of Ephraim. (See on chapter iv. 8)

Penuel on the east of Jordan, near Succoth, commanding one of the fords.

kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. ^{Israel.}
²⁸ Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves ^{Jeroboam.}
of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go
up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which
brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. ²⁹ And he set
the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan. ³⁰ And
this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship
before the one, even unto Dan.

³¹ And he made an house of high places, and made
priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of
the sons of Levi. ³² And Jeroboam ordained a feast in
the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month,
like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon
the altar. So did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the

28 The bullock was the emblem of strength, and in Syria the
ox is far the most useful of animals. Hence it was not so strange
to the Hebrew as it would be to us to choose a bullock as an
emblem of God. Moreover, many neighbouring nations made the
bull a sacred symbol, *e.g.* the Egyptians worshipped the bull
Apis, and so in the Exodus the Israelites under Aaron had made
a molten calf to symbolize Jehovah.

It is too much, better as R.V. margin, "Ye have gone up long
enough."

Behold thy gods. Cf. Aaron's words, Exodus xxxii. 4.

²⁹ *Beth-el*, the scene of Jacob's dream, fell to Benjamin in the
division of the territory, but seems to have been practically
Ephraimite. *Dan* was the furthest town to the north. Both had
long been "high places" resorted to by the people for worship.

³⁰ Jeroboam still worshipped Jehovah, and according to the
standard of his time there was no harm in worshipping Him at
the high places. (See note on iii. 2.) The sin was idolatry.
In the second commandment God had forbidden all use of the
likenesses of living things in His worship. Jeroboam was also
guilty of what we should call schism, in that he caused religious
division for selfish political ends.

The second sentence seems to mean "the people resorted
some to one, some to the other, yes, even unto distant Dan."

³¹ R.V. "houses of high places," *i.e.* two more Temples, one
for each calf.

R.V. "He made priests from among *all* the people," in con-
trast to the southern kingdom, where the priests were all Levites.
No doubt the Levites were faithful to Rehoboam and the Temple

³² Jeroboam's feast was for some reason one month later than
the Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles (see on viii. 65), which he
meant to rival. *Offered upon*, R.V. went up unto. So again in
v. 33. (See note on x. 5.)

Israel. Jeroboam. calves that he had made : and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made. ³³So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart ; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel : and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

XIII.

2. The man of God from Judah. ¹And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Beth-el : and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. ²And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD ; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name ; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. ³And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken ; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out. ⁴And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. ⁵The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. ⁶And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be

So did he in Beth-el means that he himself inaugurated the sacrifice at Beth-el, while someone else had charge of Dan.

33. The religion thus devised by man in the interests of the state could not last on when the state was overthrown by the Assyrians. And thus the ten tribes seem in exile to have been absorbed by their conquerors, because they had no strong religious bond to keep them together and distinct.

XIII.

2 See 2 Kings xxiii. 15, 16.

4 *Put forth his hand, i.e.* gave a signal to his attendants.

restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before. ⁷And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward. ⁸And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: ⁹for so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. ¹⁰So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Beth-el.

Israel.
Jeroboam.

¹¹Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father. ¹²And their father said unto them, What way

8 The prophet must show that he was disinterested. There were often false prophets who gave as God's message what they thought would pay; and kings rewarded their blessings, or bought off their curses. Two centuries later, when once more at Bethel the (true) prophet Amos denounced another Jeroboam, the priest insultingly told him to go back to Judah and earn his living there by his threatening prophecies. (Amos vii. 12.)

9 He would be less likely to be stopped on a way where he was not recognised.

11 There were at this period always numbers of prophets; for prophecy was a regular profession, and the prophets were organized into guilds. (See Introduction, p. xxi.) As a rule, it practically came to much the same thing as what we call preaching. The true prophet, like the preacher, tried to teach people to be righteous and God-fearing. Prophecy was not confined to Israel, or to the worshippers of the true God; for while some prophesied in the name of Jehovah, others did so in the name of Baal. (xviii. 19.) And of the former some were true, some false; the false cried, "Jehovah saith," when He had not sent them. (Ezek. xiii. 6.) This prophet of Bethel spoke falsely in v. 18, truly in v. 21; and both times professed to have a message from Jehovah. Sometimes, especially among idolaters, we find the prophets raving in frenzy like the dervishes of to-day (xviii. 28).

The real meaning of the word *prophet* is one who brings a message from God: and God's spokesman, the prophet, did not necessarily foretell future events, though, as in this chapter, this was often part of his message.

Israel.
Jeroboam

went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. ¹³ And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon. ¹⁴ And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am. ¹⁵ Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. ¹⁶ And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: ¹⁷ for it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. ¹⁸ He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. ¹⁹ So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

²⁰ And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back: ²¹ and he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, ²² but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

²³ And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. ²⁴ And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew

14 The Heb. has *the* oak, a well-known tree, probably regarded as sacred.

18 The prophet's motive in lying is not clear. Perhaps he wished to weaken the effect of the man of God's other words, by making him go back upon what he had said in this matter.

24 Lions are now extinct in Palestine, as are wolves in England; but they must have been fairly common in O.T. days.

him ; and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass ^{Israel.} stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase. ²⁵ And, ^{Jeroboam.} behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase : and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. ²⁶ And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD : therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him. ²⁷ And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him. ²⁸ And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcase : the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass. ²⁹ And the prophet took up the carcase of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back : and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. ³⁰ And he laid his carcase in his own grave ; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother ! ³¹ And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried ; lay my bones beside his bones. ³² For the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Beth-el, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.

³³ After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priest of the high places : whosoever would, he consecrated

25 It was shown to be "the act of God" by the lion's standing as guard, instead of devouring the carcase.

31 In consequence, his bones were not disturbed by Josiah. (2 Kings xxiii. 18.)

32 *Samaria* was not yet built (see xvi. 24), and therefore the country could not at this date be called Samaria. This chapter then was not put into its present form till long after Jeroboam's death. This may account for the prophet's name not being known.

33 See note on xii. 31.

Israel. him, and he became one of the priests of the high places.
 Jeroboam. ³⁴ And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.

ON THE PUNISHMENT OF THE MAN OF GOD FROM JUDAH.

The punishment of the prophet who was deceived and the immunity of the deceiver seem unjust. The following considerations should be taken into account:—

(a) God's justice, so far as it is seen on earth, is not 'poetical' justice. Our faith is constantly tried by the ungodly being in such prosperity, and the righteous suffering misfortune. This chapter only gives one more instance. We must remember that we see on earth only the first stage of God's dealings with each soul.

(b) Was it a harder fate to be slain suddenly than to live in remorse for having slain another by a lie?

(c) Misfortune is no proof of exceptional sin. (Luke xiii. 1-5; John ix. 1-3.) And punishment may be a sign of the love that is ready to forgive. (Heb. xii. 5-11; and see note on chap. viii. 36.)

(d) The moral of the chapter is not "lying is wrong," for that we know already; but "beware of false prophets." (Matt. vii. 15.) To be deceived may mean ruin.

(e) As part of our probation, we have to face intellectual uncertainty as well as the allurements of pleasure. We are trained by the discipline of half-lights and fallible guides. We must learn to use our own judgments. (1 John iv. 1.)

(f) The prophet in this chapter shows what we ought *not* to do when in doubt. (1) He forsook what he himself had heard, to follow what another *said* he had been told. (2) The new message made out God to have changed His mind, and alleged no cause whatever. (3) There were obvious reasons why he should be charged to return straight, none why he should go back. (4) The lying prophet ought to have rebuked Jeroboam long ago: he was therefore not to be trusted. In fact, the man of God from Judah seems to have surrendered his reason at discretion to the guidance of another, instead of looking the matter round and praying before he decided.

But after all, we do not know enough of the case to presume to pronounce on God's justice in it; and we have no right to expect to understand Him fully yet. (Rom. xi. 33, 34.)

XIV.

¹At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick. ²And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there is Ahijah the prophet, which told me that I should be king over this people. ³And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child. ⁴And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see; for his eyes were set by reason of his age.

⁵And the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he is sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another woman. ⁶And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings. ⁷Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel, ⁸and rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes; ⁹but hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to

² On *Ahijah* and *Shiloh*, see notes on xi. 29.

³ Peasants' food. *Cracknel* in English means a biscuit which easily cracks, and this seems to be nearly the meaning of the Hebrew word.

⁴ *Set*, *i.e.* blind, with no sparkle or movement, but the fixed look which blind eyes have.

⁹ *All that were before thee.* A phrase natural in the case of Jeroboam's successors, like Ahab (xvi. 30); but here misapplied to Jeroboam by the compiler of the book, who had favourite phrases, which he uses again and again, such as verse 19.

Israel.
Jeroboam.
3. His son's
death.

Israel.
Jeroboam.

anger, and hast cast me behind thy back: ¹⁰ therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every man child, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be ail gone. ¹¹ Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the LORD hath spoken it. ¹² Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die. ¹³ And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. ¹⁴ Moreover the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: but what? even now. ¹⁵ For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger. ¹⁶ And he shall give Israel up because of the

Other gods. God would not recognise the calves as images of Himself; for the idolatrous worship was so sure to degenerate that He could only disown it.

¹⁰ R. V., "Him that is shut up and him that is left at large," *i.e.* bond and free, or young and old, the young being under restraint and the grown-up free. A favourite phrase of the compiler of Kings, only found once elsewhere.

¹¹ Dogs are scavengers and unclean animals in the East. They are never spoken of with respect in the O.T., though watch-dogs are mentioned once or twice.

¹⁴ The English means, "What do I say? It shall be even now. There shall be no delay."

¹⁵ *The river*, Euphrates.

Groves, R. V. "Asherim" (*ē*, pronounce like 'share'; the singular is *Ashērah*). The rendering 'grove' is due to a mistake, and the word means the wooden symbol of a god or goddess, whether a pole like a may-pole, or a living tree. This emblem was used in connection with more than one god, and (as this passage seems to imply) even with the worship of Jehovah, when debased; but some hold that the pole always represented a particular goddess of fertility. The *Asherah* was worshipped as if charged with divine power.

sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin. ¹⁷And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah: and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died; ¹⁸and they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.

Israel.
Jeroboam.

¹⁹And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred, and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. ²⁰And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

4. His
death.

²¹And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. ²²And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done.

Judah.
Rehoboam.

¹⁷ *Tirzah*, an ancient Canaanite city, which became the residence of the northern kings from Jeroboam to Omri. Its exact site is not known, but there can be no doubt it was in the hill country of Ephraim.

¹⁸ *By the hand of*—by means of, as in viii. 53.

¹⁹ *Jeroboam* warred with Rehoboam (chap. xv. 6) and with Abijah his son (2 Chron. xiii.). And since the list of conquered towns on the monument at Karnak includes several in the northern kingdom, it has been inferred that he did battle with Shishak, king of Egypt; but see note on verse 25.

The book of the chronicles, etc. The official records of the public doings of the kings, used by the compiler of the Books of Kings, but now lost to us. See Introduction, p. x.

²¹ That Rehoboam should have been forty-one at his accession is hardly consistent with chap. xii. 8. Some read twenty-one here, and the Septuagint in another place has sixteen.

His mother's name. The queen-mother was often possessed of supreme influence in the court. (Cf. chap. xv. 13.)

²² God's wrath is often called jealousy, because the sinner wrongs His love by giving himself up to some counter-attraction.

Judah.
Rehoboam.

²³ For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.

²⁴ And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

²⁵ And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: ²⁶ and he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made. ²⁷ And king Rehoboam made in their stead brazen shields, and committed them unto the hands of the chief of the guard, which kept the door of the king's house. ²⁸ And it was so, when the king went into the house of the LORD, that the guard bare them, and brought them back into the guard chamber.

²⁹ Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles

²³ *High places* here means temples or altars on high places.

Images, R.V. "pillars or obelisks" These were cairns or isolated stones, and were often regarded as embodiments of some divine power. In the O.T. we often hear of their being put up by worshippers of Jehovah, to mark some signal mercy or revelation from God; but here they are spoken of as if necessarily idolatrous. *Groves*, *Asherim*. (See on verse 15.)

²⁴ The Canaanite nations had been overcome by the Hebrews, in accordance with the natural, that is the divine, law that vice saps vigour. Their life, and especially their religion, were licentious. And now the Hebrews were lapsing into their immoralities.

²⁵ *Shishak*, see xi. 40. For a fuller account of the invasion, see 2 Chronicles xii. 2-9. On his return Shishak set up an inscription at Karnak in Egypt, recounting his conquests, from which it appears that he also captured many towns in the northern kingdom, such as Mahanaim, Bethhoron, Megiddo. Some think that these places had held out for Rehoboam, and that Jeroboam induced his former champion, Shishak, to reduce them for him. It is in favour of this view that many of these towns were Levitical, and the Levites evidently clung to the house of David and the Temple at Jerusalem. (See on xii. 31.)

²⁶ For the *shields*, see chapter x. 17.

²⁹ *The book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah*. Not our Second Book of Chronicles, which is of later date than Kings, but the official record of public acts and events. This record was used

of the kings of Judah? ³⁰And there was war between Judah.
 Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. ³¹And Reho- Rehoboam.
 boam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his
 fathers in the city of David. And his mother's name
 was Naamah an Ammonitess. And Abijam his son
 reigned in his stead.

XV.

¹Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the Abijam.
 son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah. ²Three
 years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name
 was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom. ³And he
 walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done
 before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD
 his God, as the heart of David his father. ⁴Nevertheless
 for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lamp
 in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish
 Jerusalem: ⁵because David did that which was right in
 the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any
 thing that he commanded him all the days of his life,
 save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. ⁶And
 there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the
 days of his life. ⁷Now the rest of the acts of Abijam,
 and all that he did, are they not written in the book
 of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there
 was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. ⁸And Abijam
 slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city
 of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

⁹And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel Asa.
 reigned Asa over Judah. ¹⁰And forty and one years
 reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was
 in the composition of the Books of Kings, and the same material
 often reappears in 2 Chronicles.

³¹ *Abijam* is spelt Abijah, except here and in chapter xv.

XV.

² *Abishalom* is the same name as Absalom, and David's son
 is here meant; but daughter probably means granddaughter.

⁴ *A lamp*, see note on xi. 36.

⁶ This verse is out of place, and is not found in the Septuagint.
 It got into the Hebrew by mistake.

^{10, 13} Probably *mother* is a mistake for grandmother. The
 Sept. has Ana for Maachah.

Judah.
Asa.

Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom. ¹¹And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father. ¹²And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. ¹³And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron. ¹⁴But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days. ¹⁵And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the LORD, silver, and gold, and vessels.

¹⁶And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. ¹⁷And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. ¹⁸Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to Ben-hadad, the

¹³ *Because she had made an abominable image for an Asherah.* (R. V.) Apparently the pole (see on xiv. 15) was roughly carved into some sort of image, probably of human form.

Kidron, the brook in the valley between the Temple hill and the Mount of Olives.

¹⁴ See note on iii. 2.

¹⁵ Asa tried to replace what Shishak had carried off.

¹⁶ *Baasha*, the third king of Israel. See verse 27 foll.

¹⁷ *Ramah* was a sort of debatable ground, in the tribe of Benjamin, five miles north of Jerusalem, and about the same distance from the frontier of Ephraim. It was famous as the birth-place, residence, and burial-place of Samuel. For an enemy to fortify Ramah was virtually to blockade Jerusalem.

¹⁸ Asa began the policy, afterwards so disastrous to Judah, of purchasing aid from the distant foreigner, in order to be delivered from the attacks of the northern kingdom. Cf. 2 Kings xvi. 7. In 2 Chron. xvi. 7 we are told that Hanani the seer rebuked him for thus trusting in man rather than in God.

Damascus, see note on xi. 24. From this time on, for more than 100 years, the Syrian kingdom of Damascus was the rival and too successful foe of the kingdom of Israel.

Three kings of Damascus named Ben-hadad are mentioned

son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, ¹⁹There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me. ²⁰So Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-beth-maachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. ²¹And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building of Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah. ²²Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.

²³The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Nevertheless in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. ²⁴And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.

²⁵And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel. Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and Nadab.

in the O.T., the others being this man's (?) son (chap. xx.), who was murdered by Hazael (2 Kings viii. 15), and Hazael's son. (2 Kings xiii. 3.)

²⁰ All these towns were in the far north. For Dan, see note on xii. 29. The lake of Galilee was anciently called the lake of Chinneroth. (Pronounce the *c* or *ch* hard, as in chemist.)

²¹ *Tirzah*, see note on xiv. 17.

²² *Geba* and *Mizpah* were close to Ramah, and would serve to defend Jerusalem from the north.

²³ We are told a great deal more about Asa in 2 Chron. xiv.-xvi., and especially of his victory over Zerah, king of Egypt.

²⁵ *Nadab* began in the second year of Asa, and died in the third. (v. 33.) This is counted as reigning two years, a method of reckoning which makes O.T. chronology very difficult.

Israel.
Nadab.

reigned over Israel two years. ²⁶And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin. ²⁷And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. ²⁸Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead. ²⁹And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilouite: ³⁰because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger. ³¹Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Baasha.

³²And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. ³³In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years. ³⁴And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

XVI.

¹Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, ²Forasmuch as I exalted

²⁷ *Gibbethon* was allotted to Dan, *i.e.* to the southern part of the tribe. The Philistines had seized it ('belonged' does not imply any right of ownership), and Nadab was trying to drive them out.

XVI.

¹ Jehu's father was also a prophet. (See note on xv. 18.) Jehu later on rebuked Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xix. 2) for helping Ahab in his campaign against Ramoth-gilead. (Chap. xxii.) He also wrote a history of the reign of Jehoshaphat. (2 Chron. xx. 34.)

² God supervises all human efforts, and gives success to whom He will. Thus all kings reign *Dei gratia*.

thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins; ³behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. ⁴Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat. ⁵Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ⁶So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead. ⁷And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the Lord against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him.

⁸In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years. ⁹And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of his house in Tirzah. ¹⁰And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead. ¹¹And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, that he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him not a single man child, neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends. ¹²Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the

7 And because he killed him, God used Baasha to punish the house of Jeroboam for its sins. He therefore, by judging another, had already passed sentence of condemnation on himself, for he did the same things. (Rom. ii. 1.) And so his being God's instrument was no merit in him, but only increased his guilt.

9 Captains of half his chariots. An office inferior to that of Omri, captain of the host. (v. 16.)

Israel.
Elah. LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, ¹³for all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities. ¹⁴Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Zimri. ¹⁵In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. ¹⁶And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp. ¹⁷And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. ¹⁸And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died, ¹⁹for his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin. ²⁰Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Civil war. ²¹Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri. ²²But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

Omri. ²³In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah

¹³ *Vanities*, i.e. idolatrous worships which were based on delusion, and had no reality in them. Idol (*εἶδωλον*) means a shadow without substance, a delusion, a vanity.

¹⁸ *Palace*, R.V. castle.

¹⁹ *In his sin which he did*, i.e. Jeroboam's sin, which Jeroboam did.

²³ As it stands, this verse conflicts with verse 29. The simplest mode of reconciliation is to alter verses 22 and 23 thus: "So Tibni died, and Omri reigned (alone) in the thirty-first year of

began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years Israel.
 reigned he in Tirzah. ²⁴And he bought the hill Samaria Omri.
 of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill,
 and called the name of the city which he built, after the
 name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria. ²⁵But
 Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did
 worse than all that were before him. ²⁶For he walked
 in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his
 sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD
 God of Israel to anger with their vanities. ²⁷Now the
 rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might
 that he shewed, are they not written in the book of the
 chronicles of the kings of Israel? ²⁸So Omri slept with
 his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his
 son reigned in his stead.

²⁹And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Ahab.

Asa king of Judah. Omri reigned over Israel twelve years," etc. If so, the struggle between Omri and Tibni lasted four years, and the twelve years include these four, and are counted from Zinri's death in Asa's twenty-seventh year. This confusion is as old as the Septuagint.

²⁴ This is the first mention of Samaria, which henceforth was the capital of the northern kingdom. It lies six miles N.W. of Shechem, and nearer the Mediterranean. The descent is so steep that even the top of the hill of Samaria is 400 feet below Shechem. Samaria was destroyed and repopled several times. It first fell before the Assyrians, when the kingdom of Israel came to an end (B. C. 721); next before Alexander the Great (B. C. 331); and then before the Jews under John Hyrcanus the Maccabee. (B. C. 109.) It was rebuilt in 25 B. C. by Herod the Great, who called it Sebaste (*i. e.* Augusta), and under this name it still survives as a small village.

²⁸ Four kings of the house of Omri reigned in Samaria, viz. Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram. His dynasty thus lasted fifty years; and as he was the builder of the capital, he seemed to foreigners the founder of the kingdom, so much so that the Assyrians long afterwards spoke of the northern kingdom as "the land of the house of Omri," and called Jehu (who cut off his descendants to a man) "the son of Omri," meaning that he sat on Omri's throne. We may infer that Omri was, in a worldly sense, a more successful and famous monarch than the brief notice here given would suggest. He made Moab subject to Israel (see 2 Kings iii. 4), as we learn from the 'Moabite Stone,' an inscription set up by Mesha, king of Moab. See p. 105.

Israel.
Ahab.
1. Marriage
with
Jezebel.

Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years. ³⁰And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. ³¹And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. ³²And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. ³³And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

³⁴In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

31 This marriage with Jezebel brought ruin not only to Israel, but through her daughter Athaliah to Judah.

The word *Baal* originally meant lord, husband, owner of land, and in this sense it is often applied to the gods, and even to Jehovah. But later on its use is restricted to the gods of the heathen, and it becomes the proper name of the god of the Zidonians. This stage is not quite reached in this verse, for it is in Hebrew *the Baal*, and Hebrew does not use the article before proper names. This Baal was also called Melkarth, and by the Greeks was identified with Heracles. He was the husband of Ashtoreth. (xi. 5.)

33 *And Ahab made the Asherah.* (R.V.) See note on xiv. 15. As Jehu, who destroyed Baal out of Israel, left the Asherah standing (2 Kings xiii. 6), it is doubtful in whose honour this sacred pole was erected. It may have represented Jehovah, for Ahab himself probably did not cease to worship Him because he introduced Baal (see chap. xxii.), though Jezebel sought to exterminate the prophets of Jehovah. (xviii. 4.)

34 *Jericho* lies 600 feet *below* the Mediterranean, and its climate is sub-tropical: it is about six miles from the Jordan, which is here crossed by fords (Josh. ii. 7), and just above the north end of the Dead Sea. It became a place of great importance. For Joshua's curse on the man who should rebuild it, see Joshua vi. 26.

In Abiram, R.V. with the loss of Abiram. It is implied that all his other sons died in the interval.

XVII.

¹And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

Israel.
Ahab.
2. Elijah
and the
great
drought.

²And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, ³Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. ⁴And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. ⁵So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. ⁶And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

⁷And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. ⁸And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, ⁹Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. ¹⁰So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city,

¹ At this point the compiler of the Books of Kings inserts a section from a new source, a narrative of the career of Elijah, written by some other prophet. No doubt this narrative originally gave some account of Elijah's previous life; but it was better omitted. The abrupt entrance of Elijah on the scene is both dramatic and characteristic.

Tishbite, i.e. born at Tishbeh (in Gilead) as the Septuagint explains. The place is not otherwise known.

³ *Cherith* should be pronounced with the accent of the English word 'caress,' only changing the last syllable to -eeth. The site is unknown. 'Eastward' suggests that it was in Gilead.

⁴ Young ravens, it was supposed, were driven out of their nests by the old birds, and how they were fed was a mystery. (Psalm cxlvii. 9; Job xxxviii. 41; Luke xii. 24.) Hence the appropriateness of their feeding Elijah.

⁹ *Zarephath* is said to have been situated between Tyre and Zidon. Our Lord points out that it was in a Gentile, not a Jewish village, that Elijah took refuge. (Luke iv. 26.)

Elijah.

behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks : and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. ¹¹And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. ¹²And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse ; and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. ¹³And Elijah said unto her, Fear not ; go and do as thou hast said : but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. ¹⁴For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. ¹⁵And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah : and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. ¹⁶And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

¹⁷And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick ; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. ¹⁸And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God ? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son ? ¹⁹And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. ²⁰And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son ? ²¹And he stretched himself

¹² *The barrel and the cruse.* She had only one of each.

¹⁵ Notice the woman's faith in the prophet.

¹⁸ The woman thinks that Elijah's presence has drawn down God's attention on her, and now He notices her sins and punishes her.

²⁰ *Also, i. e.* as well as upon me, who am an exile in fear of my life.

upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and **Elijah.** said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. ²²And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. ²³And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. ²⁴And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.

XVIII.

¹And it came to pass after many days, that the word **3. Elijah on Carmel.** of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. ²And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria.

³And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: ⁴For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) ⁵And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. ⁶So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

⁷And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah? ⁸And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. ⁹And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me? ¹⁰As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the

Elijah

kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. ¹¹And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. ¹²And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth. ¹³Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? ¹⁴And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me. ¹⁵And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day. ¹⁶So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

¹⁷And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? ¹⁸And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. ¹⁹Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

²⁰So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and

17 R. V. Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?

18 The *Baalim*. The plural is used because there were many heathen gods, each called the Baal in its own country. Thus we hear of Baal-peor in Moab, Baal-berith at Shechem, Baal-zebul at Ekron. These gods would be more or less the same, the nations being near akin, and their religions being parallel developments from a common stock.

Carmel is the mountain ridge that bounds the valley of Jezreel (see note on ix. 15) on the south, and jutting out into the sea, breaks the evenness of the coast of Palestine. The highest point (1700 feet high) is about seven miles inland. It is still called Elijah's Mount. Carmel, the village where Nabal lived (1 Sam. xxv.), is quite another place.

19 *Prophets of the groves*, R. V. of the Asherah. See note on xiv. 15.

gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. Elijah.

²¹And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. ²²Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. ²³Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: ²⁴and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. ²⁵And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. ²⁶And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. ²⁷And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. ²⁸And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and

21 *Halt, i.e.* limp and totter. Many probably tried to combine the two worships, as there is reason to think Ahab did.

Read, "If Jehovah be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him."

24 Not *gods*, but god. (R. V.)

26 R. V. "They leaped about the altar." Dancing was often a part of religious worship, as when David danced before the ark. But here probably the prophets did more; they worked themselves into a frenzy, like the howling and dancing dervishes of to-day. (Cf. v. 28.)

27 With this mockery cf. Pss cxv., cxxxv.; Isaiah xlv. 12-20.

28 *Lancets*, spears, not surgical instruments. R. V. lances.

Elijah.

lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. ²⁹And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. ³⁰And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. ³¹And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: ³²And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. ³³And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. ³⁴And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. ³⁵And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. ³⁶And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. ³⁷Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. ³⁸Then the fire of

²⁹ *Prophesied* here means raved. (Cf. Saul among the prophets, 1 Sam. xix. 24.)

The evening sacrifice. The word here used means the meal-offering. (See note on viii. 64.) The daily sacrifice, as prescribed in Ex. xxix. 38, consisted of a burnt-offering, with a meal-offering and a drink-offering. Elijah's sacrifice was a burnt-offering. (v. 38.)

³⁰ Carmel was one of the high places where Jehovah had long been worshipped. (See note on iii. 2.)

³⁷ *That the people may know that thou Jehovah art the God, i.e. the only God.*

the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the **Elijah**. wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

⁴⁰And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there. ⁴¹And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. ⁴²So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, ⁴³and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. ⁴⁴And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. ⁴⁵And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. ⁴⁶And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

³⁹ And they said, Jehovah, He is the God; Jehovah, He is the God.

⁴⁰ The *Kishon* flows on the north side of Carmel, through the valley of Jezreel. (See note on ix. 15.) Elijah's righteous zeal carried him further than our Lord allowed in His disciples (Luke ix. 55). But in an imperfect age God puts up with imperfect characters and actions.

⁴⁴ R. V. As small as a man's hand.

⁴⁵ *Jezreel* was a royal residence. It was situated on the pass whence on the west the Kishon flowed down to the Mediterranean, and on the east a tributary flowed down to the Jordan. Here was Naboth's vineyard and Ahab's ivory palace, and here Jehu slew Jezebel and her son Jehoram. (2 Kings ix. 25-36.)

⁴⁶ Elijah seems to have felt the need of some great physical exertion after the mental tension of the day. But he was too prudent to enter a walled city, and put himself into Jezebel's hands.

XIX.

Israel.
Ahab.

4. Elijah
on Horeb.

¹And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. ²Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.

³And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. ⁴But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

⁵And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. ⁶And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. ⁷And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. ⁸And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

³ *Beer-sheba* was in the extreme south, on the confines of Simeon and Judah, and is here assigned to the southern kingdom.

⁴ *The wilderness* of Paran. (See note on xi. 18.)

Juniper. The tree meant is really a kind of broom, with white flowers.

Elijah suffered from reaction after the excitement of the scene on Carmel. He felt he had only gained a moment's triumph; things were really no better than before. The most enthusiastic natures are the most liable to such depression.

⁷ *The journey.* God was summoning him to receive a revelation at Horeb.

⁸ *Horeb* means Mount Sinai and the surrounding region. To traverse the distance (about 200 miles) would not occupy the forty days; but Elijah was to be for a while alone among the mountains, like Moses and our Lord.

⁹And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; **Elijah.** and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? ¹⁰And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. ¹¹And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: ¹²and after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. ¹³And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? ¹⁴And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. ¹⁵And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: ¹⁶and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and

⁹ Heb. *the cave*, *i.e.* probably the cleft where it was thought Moses had stood. (Ex. xxxiii. 22.)

¹¹ *Go forth.* Elijah obeys in *v.* 13, when he recognises God's presence in the still small voice.

¹² God reveals Himself to conscience rather than by the awfulness of His power, to humility rather than to fiery zeal.

¹⁵ R. V. margin, "by the wilderness to Damascus."

¹⁵⁻¹⁸ The cures for depression are perseverance in work and the assurance that there are others in like case, the seven thousand.

¹⁵⁻¹⁷ These verses must not be taken too literally. Elijah carried out God's command by calling Elisha (*v.* 19), and telling him about Hazael and Jehu. (See 2 Kings viii. 11-13 and ix.)

Elijah.

Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. ¹⁷And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. ¹⁸Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

¹⁹So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. ²⁰And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? ²¹And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

¹⁶ *Abel-meholah* was in the Jordan valley on the west side.

¹⁷ For Hazael's ravages, see 2 Kings x. 32, 33. For Jehu's slaughter of the worshippers of Baal, see 2 Kings x. There is no record of Elisha's slaying anyone.

¹⁸ R.V. Yet will I leave Me. There was a faithful remnant, and God would spare them.

For kissing as an act of worship, cf. Hosea xiii. 2.

¹⁹ Each plough was yoked to a pair of oxen; and thus Elisha had eleven farm-servants with him, and must have been a man of wealth.

The prophets seem to have often worn rough, hairy mantles as a sort of uniform. (See 2 Kings i. 8, Zechariah xiii. 4, and Matt. iii. 4.)

²⁰ Probably Elijah, like our Lord (Luke ix. 58), pretended to deter Elisha, in order that he might not act hastily and without counting the cost.

XX.

¹And Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it.

Israel.
Ahab.
⁵ The war
with Syria.

²And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-hadad, ³Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine. ⁴And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have.

⁵And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children; ⁶yet I will send my servants unto thee to morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away.

⁷Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not. ⁸And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him,

¹ This is probably the son of the Ben-hadad of chapter xv. 18. (See v. 34.)

Kings, that is, rulers of the numerous tribes round about Damascus, which were now united under its leadership, but had once been subject to Solomon. (iv. 21.)

^{2, 3} *Ben-hadad* claims that Ahab should surrender all he has to him. To demand the king's harem was to demand his abdication, even his death. (See note on ii. 24.) No doubt there had been a severe struggle before things came to this pass. (See on v. 15.)

⁶ Ben-hadad now demands in addition all the goods of all Ahab's subjects.

⁷ *Seeketh mischief*, i.e. 'means our ruin.'

Israel.
Ahab.

nor consent. ⁹Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again. ¹⁰And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me. ¹¹And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off. ¹²And it came to pass, when Ben-hadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array. And they set themselves in array against the city.

¹³And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD. ¹⁴And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou. ¹⁵Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand. ¹⁶And they went out at noon. But Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him. ¹⁷And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben-

¹⁰ *i.e.* 'we shall be so many, that when we tear down the walls of Samaria, there will not be a handful each for us to scatter to the winds.'

¹² *Pavilions*, tents, or even booths made of branches.

¹⁴ *The princes of the provinces* were the governors of districts in the kingdom of Israel, and the *young men* their 'esquires' and attendants, inexperienced in war. *Order*, R.V. begin.

¹⁵ *Numbered*, R.V. mustered. The number (7000) is very small. No doubt Ahab's army had been cut to pieces in battle.

hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are Israel.
 men come out of Samaria. ¹⁸And he said, Whether Ahab.
 they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether
 they be come out for war, take them alive. ¹⁹So these
 young men of the princes of the provinces came out of
 the city, and the army which followed them. ²⁰And
 they slew every one his man: and the Syrians fled; and
 Israel pursued them: and Ben-hadad the king of Syria
 escaped on an horse with the horsemen. ²¹And the
 king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and
 chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.

²²And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said
 unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what
 thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of
 Syria will come up against thee. ²³And the servants of
 the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of
 the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let
 us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be
 stronger than they. ²⁴And do this thing, Take the kings
 away, every man out of his place, and put captains in
 their rooms: ²⁵and number thee an army, like the army
 that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for
 chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, and
 surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened
 unto their voice, and did so.

²⁶And it came to pass at the return of the year, that
 Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek,

²⁶ *i.e.* on a baggage-horse with the cavalry. The two Hebrew
 words are quite distinct.

²² *The return of the year* means when the season for fighting
 comes round again.

²³ R.V. "Their god is a god of the hills." Most men of the
 time, including the Hebrews, considered that each nation had
 its own god, whose domain and power were strictly limited. It
 is no wonder, then, that the Syrians believed that Jehovah was
 a real god, but hoped He might only be formidable among the
 mountains.

²⁴ *i.e.* give the command of the detachments to professional
 soldiers. But it is possible that the kings were deposed from
 civil authority also.

²⁶ There were several *Apheks*; this is probably the one in the
 valley of Jezreel. (1 Sam. xxix. 1.)

Israel.
Ahab.

to fight against Israel. ²⁷And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country. ²⁸And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD. ²⁹And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day. ³⁰But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.

³¹And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life. ³²So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, Is he yet alive? he is my brother. ³³Now the men did diligently observe whether any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it: and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Ben-hadad came forth to him; and he caused

²⁷ *Were all present*, R.V. "were victualled."

²⁸ *Man of God*. See note on xii. 22.

³⁰ *The wall*, i.e. the wall of the city. There was probably an earthquake.

³¹ *Ropes upon our heads* means, no doubt, ropes round our necks.

³³ They caught up his words, and repeated them, as pledging Ahab to spare Ben-hadad's life.

him to come up into the chariot. ³⁴And Ben-hadad said Israel.
unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy Ahab.
father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets
for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria.
Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this
covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent
him away.

³⁵And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said
unto his neighbour in the word of the LORD, Smite me,
I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him.
³⁶Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed
the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art
departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon
as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew
him. ³⁷Then he found another man, and said, Smite
me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in
smiting he wounded him. ³⁸So the prophet departed,
and waited for the king by the way, and disguised
himself with ashes upon his face. ³⁹And as the king
passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy
servant went out into the midst of the battle; and,
behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me,
and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing,
then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay
a talent of silver. ⁴⁰And as thy servant was busy here
and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said
unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast
decided it. ⁴¹And he hastened, and took the ashes away
from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him

34 There was to be a "Jews' quarter" in Damascus, where they were to dwell and trade under the protection of the government. Ben-hadad's father is probably the Ben-hadad of chapter xv. 18. Ben-hadad did not restore all the cities (See xxii. 3).

It appears from the Assyrian inscriptions that Ahab and Ben-hadad in alliance fought with Shalmaneser II. and were defeated by him in B.C. 854.

35 *The sons of the prophets, i.e. members of the guilds into which the prophets were divided.* See note on xiii. 11.

38 *With ashes upon his face.* R.V. "With his headband over his eyes." And so in v. 41.

Israel.
Ahab.

that he was of the prophets. ⁴²And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people. ⁴³And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

XXI.

6. Naboth's
vineyard.

¹And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. ²And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. ³And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. ⁴And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

⁵But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? ⁶And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. ⁷And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

⁸So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.

⁴ This means his house at Samaria, not the palace at Jezreel, mentioned in *v.* 1.

⁷ Compare Lady Macbeth:

“Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers.”

⁹And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, Israel. and set Naboth on high among the people: ¹⁰and set two Ahab. men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

¹¹And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. ¹²They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. ¹³And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died. ¹⁴Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

¹⁵And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead. ¹⁶And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

¹⁷And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ¹⁸Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard

⁹ The *fast* signified that some great sin had been committed, for which the whole city must humble itself.

Set Naboth on high, whether in honour, so that the accusation might seem a brave act of moral courage, or as an accused person, made prominent for all to see.

¹⁰ *Belial* means worthlessness, and is not really a proper name in O.T., though in later times the Jews personified it. (See 2 Cor. vi. 15.) To call a worthless fellow a son of worthlessness is a common idiom in Hebrew.

¹³ So our Lord and St. Stephen suffered "without the gate." We learn from 2 Kings ix. 26 that Naboth's sons were also slain.

¹⁸ *Which dwelleth in Samaria*. So the R.V., because Ahab was now at Jezreel.

Israel.
Ahab.

of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. ¹⁹And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. ²⁰And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy! And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD. ²¹Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every man child, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, ²²and will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin. ²³And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. ²⁴Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.

(²⁵But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. ²⁶And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.) ²⁷And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. ²⁸And the word of the LORD came to Elijah

¹⁹ He who lets another act for him, can only disown the responsibility, if he does all he can to make amends. And he who keeps the spoil keeps the guilt. The curse was not fulfilled in the *letter*, for the dogs licked Ahab's blood in Samaria, not in Jezreel; but the body of his son Jehoram was thrown to the dogs by Jehu in the portion of Naboth. (2 Kings ix. 25.)

²¹ See notes on xiv. 10.

²⁶ *Amorites* is often used as the general name for the population of Canaan before the Israelites invaded it.

²⁹ We do not know for certain whether Ahab's repentance lasted, or passed quickly away, as is common with weak characters. But his words in chapter xxii. 8 and 27 are hardly consistent with sincere penitence.

the Tishbite, saying, ²⁹Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

Israel.
Ahab.

XXII.

¹And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel. ²And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. ³And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? ⁴And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses. ⁵And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day. ⁶Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they

7. His
death.

¹ During these *three years* Ahab and Ben-hadad were defeated at Karkar by Shalmaneser II., king of Assyria. It seems that this disaster broke the alliance up, and so Ahab sought the help of Judah, and renewed the war with Syria.

² *Israel* and *Judah* now began an alliance (see *v.* 44) which lasted some twenty years; and Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram married Ahab's daughter Athaliah. It is possible that this alliance was forced on Jehoshaphat; for verse 4 sounds like the words of a dependent king, rather than of an ally dealing on equal terms. (Cf. 2 Kings iii. 7.) However, according to 2 Chronicles xix 2, the prophet Jehu (cf. 1 Kings xvi. 1) rebuked Jehoshaphat for his alliance with Ahab, which implies that he could have helped it.

³ *Ramoth-gilead* was one of the chief fortresses in Gilead, for which see note on chapter ii. 7. It is probable that it was one of the cities Ben-hadad had promised to restore to Ahab. (xx. 34.)

⁶ These were professional prophets, but of what God? Jezebel had cut off the prophets of Jehovah (xviii. 4), and Elijah those of Baal. (xviii. 40.) In verse 6 these prophets use the indefinite word Lord (not LORD = Jehovah); and in verse 7 Jehoshaphat contrasts them with the prophets of Jehovah. Yet in verses 11 and 12 they claim to speak in the name of Jehovah; probably they only used His name in order to overcome Jehoshaphat's prejudice.

Israel.
Ahab.

said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

⁷And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him? ⁸And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. ⁹Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah.

¹⁰And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. ¹¹And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them. ¹²And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the king's hand.

¹³And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good. ¹⁴And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.

¹⁵So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king. ¹⁶And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD? ¹⁷And he said, I saw all

¹⁰ *The gate* was a common place for a court of justice or for pageantry.

¹¹ *Chenāānah.* For Zedekiah's acted prophecy, compare that of Ahijah. (xi. 30.)

¹⁵ *Micaiah* spoke mockingly, and showed by his tone that he did so.

Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd : and the LORD said, These have no master : let them return every man to his house in peace. ¹⁸And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil ?

¹⁹And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD : I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. ²⁰And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead ? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. ²¹And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. ²²And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith ? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also : go forth, and do so. ²³Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.

²⁴But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee ? ²⁵And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself. ²⁶And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to

19 foll. In this vision, like that in Job i. 6 foll. and ii. 1 foll., God is likened to an earthly king, with a throne, courtiers, and counsellors. This is allegorical, just as when our Lord, for example, likens Him to a king, who made a marriage feast for his son, and went in to see the guests, whom he had gathered from the highways and hedges. (Cf. note on viii. 15.) The whole passage is therefore to be looked on rather as Micaiah's vivid way of expressing his meaning, than as a plain record of facts that took place in heaven.

²³ It was time that Ahab should die, and God allowed him to be lured to his ruin by false prophets. Their lies, like the treachery of Judas, were overruled by God so as to accomplish His purposes. And this is still the case ; men never puzzle or surprise God, however great their sins. He overrules all evil for good.

²⁴ *i.e.* ' If the spirit in me was lying, so was he also in thee.'

Israel.
Ahab.

Joash the king's son; ²⁷and say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. ²⁸And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you.

²⁹So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead. ³⁰And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle. ³¹But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel. ³²And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. ³³And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. ³⁴And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. ³⁵And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. ³⁶And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.

³⁷So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and

²⁸ R. V. "Hear, ye peoples, all of you." These words are inserted here (in the Hebrew, not in the Septuagint) by a blunder. Someone confused this Micaiah with Micah, the (minor) prophet who lived 100 years later; and these are the first words of the Book of Micah. There is a trace of the same confusion of the two names in the parallel account in 2 Chron. xviii. 14. (See R. V. marg.)

³⁰ Ahab meant to defeat Micaiah's prophecy by the disguise.

³⁴ *At a venture.* Not at random, but without knowing who it was he was aiming at.

they buried the king in Samaria. ³⁸And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake. ³⁹Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ⁴⁰So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

Israel.
Ahab.

⁴¹And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. ⁴²Jehoshaphat was thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. ⁴³And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places. ⁴⁴And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. ⁴⁵Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he shewed, and how he warred, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ⁴⁶And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land. ⁴⁷There was then no king in Edom: a deputy was king. ⁴⁸Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken

Judah.
Jehosha-
phat.

³⁸ See chapter xxi. 19 and note.

³⁹ *The ivory house*, a palace adorned with ivory.

⁴³ See note on chapter iii. 2.

⁴⁵ See note on chapter xiv. 29. Jehu the son of Hanani also wrote an account of Jehoshaphat's reign. (2 Chron. xx. 34.)

⁴⁷ We have heard nothing of the history of Edom since chapter xi. 14-25. But it seems to have been reconquered by Judah, for we hear of its revolt on the death of Jehoshaphat. (2 Kings viii. 20.) This deputy then governed in the name of the king of Judah.

⁴⁸ *Ships of Tharshish*—see note on x. 22. *Ophir*—on ix. 28. *Ezion-geber*—on ix. 26.

Broken, by a storm, which was looked upon as a sign of God's wrath against Jehoshaphat for his alliance with the house of Ahab. (2 Chron. xx. 35-37.)

Judah.
Jehoshaphat.

at Ezion-geber. ⁴⁹Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not. ⁵⁰And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

Israel.
Ahaziah.

⁵¹Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. ⁵²And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: ⁵³for he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.

50 We learn more about Jehoshaphat in 2 Chron. xvii.--xx.

ON THE LYING SPIRIT IN THE PROPHETS ENTICING AHAB TO HIS DEATH.

The 400 prophets were deceived by an evil spirit. And this happened, as all else happens, whether evil or good, by God's permission. It was time that Ahab should die; and God overruled the sin of deceit for good, as He overruled *e.g.* the treachery of Judas Iscariot. We cannot tell why God allows evil to go on so long; we only know that it never gets beyond His control.

Micaiah perceived that the prophets were giving a false message, and he told the two kings so. He puts it in the form of a dramatic scene, which is not to be interpreted literally. God does not sit on a throne, nor is He at a loss how to deal with sinners. Further, the lying spirit was an evil spirit. Micaiah's language does not go beyond Isaiah xlv. 7, and both mean only that nothing, however evil, happens without God's consent. He might stop it, if He willed to do so.

Ahab once more heard the truth from Micaiah, and hating it, disbelieved it. (Cf. John iii. 19.) Yet in his heart he feared it, for he disguised himself in the battle. God sometimes allows men to deceive themselves (or to be deceived) as a just punishment, called judicial blindness, for not obeying their duty when they did know what it was. If a man persistently sins against light, he becomes blind. (Cf. 2 Thess. ii. 9-12.) Conversely, "if any man willeth to do His will, He shall know of the teaching." (John vii. 17.)

APPENDIX

CHANGES MADE BY THE REVISED VERSION IN THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

THE following are the most important differences in 1 Kings between the (so-called) Authorised Version of 1611 and the Revised Version of 1881.

A.V.	R.V.
iv. 8. Mount Ephraim.	The hill country of Ephraim.
x. 27. The vale.	The lowland.
viii. 4. The tabernacle of the congregation.	The tent of meeting. See Preface to R.V.
viii. 64. Meat offering.	Meal offering. See Preface to R.V.
xiv. 15. Grove (groves).	Asherah (Asherim). See Preface to R.V.
xiv. 23. Image.	Pillar or obelisk.
xx. 15. To number (troops).	Muster.

The above changes are regularly repeated throughout the O.T. The references are to the passages where there are notes upon them in this book.

iv. 28. Dromedaries.	Swift steeds.
v. 18. Stonesquarers.	Gebalites.
ix. 6. If ye shall at all turn from following Me.	If ye shall turn away from following Me.
x. 28. Linen yarn.	Droves (of horses).
xii. 31. He made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.	And he made houses of high places, and made priests from among all the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

A. V.	R. V.
xiv. 10. Him that is shut up and left in Israel.	Him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel.
xvi. 18. Palace.	Castle.
xviii. 17. Art thou he that troubleth Israel?	Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?
xviii. 26. They leaped upon the altar which was made.	They leaped about the altar which was made.
xviii. 28. Lanceets.	Lances.
xix. 18. Yet I have left 7000 in Israel.	Yet will I leave Me, etc.
xx. 23. Their gods are gods of the hills.	Their god is a god of the hills.
xx. 27. (The troops) were all present.	Were victualled.
xx. 38. Disguised himself with ashes upon his face.	With his headband over his eyes.

ANALYSIS OF SOLOMON'S PRAYER

(viii. 23-53.)

It is thought well to give an analysis, because no fine literary composition wears its framework outside, and here the transitions from one part to another are, as they should be, smoothed over.

1. (23-26.) Confession of *God's faithfulness*, shown by the fulfilment of His promise to David that his son should build the Temple; and prayer for the continuance of his descendants on the throne.
2. (27-30.) Confession of *God's greatness*. The Temple not really His dwelling house, but a place where men may come to meet God, and where He will reveal Himself in mercy.
3. (31-50.) *Intercession* to God that He will hear all prayers made to Him—as Judge to do justice between man and man (31, 32)—or as One who will chastise, but in chastisement remember mercy, whether the chastisement be—disaster in war (33, 34)
drought (35, 36)
or famine (37-40):

and that He will hear even though the prayers be made by—

the foreigner in Jerusalem (41-43),
or soldiers on a campaign (44, 45),
or exiles in the land of the enemy (46-50).

4. (51-53.) Concluding appeal to *God's graciousness* shown to Israel in her past history.

THE CHARACTER OF SOLOMON

Solomon came to the throne very young (iii. 7), but had already shown his wisdom to those who knew him (ii. 9); and when God offered him his choice of blessings, he wisely chose wisdom as the quality most needed by a king. (iii. 7-12.) Accordingly wisdom was his chief characteristic. We may analyse his wisdom thus :

- (a) Knowledge of the world and of human nature : witness his Proverbs (iv. 32) and his judgment (iii. 16-28).
- (β) Power of organizing the administration of the kingdom, and developing its resources (iv. 1-19; ix. 15-19; x. 14-29). But it must be owned that he showed a most unwise favouritism towards Judah. (See notes on iv. 8-19; xi. 28; xii. 1.)
- (γ) Statesmanship in his alliance with Tyre (v. 1-12; ix. 10-14)—his government of numerous dependent kings (iv. 21)—his encouragement of maritime enterprise (ix. 26-28; x. 22). Also in his dealings with the dangerous persons of whom his father had warned him. (ii., with note on ii. 45.)
- (δ) Learning in Natural Science of all kinds (iv. 33).
- (ε) Skill as a poet (iv. 32).
- (ζ) Skill in architecture and the ornamental arts, or at least the wisdom to use the skill of others.

But Solomon's moral character was far inferior to his intellectual gifts. He was luxurious (xi. 3), and fond of splendour (x. 18-23). And he was weak enough, in spite of his wisdom, to allow his wives to persuade him to introduce idolatry (xi. 7, 8), his enemies to gain a footing in his kingdom (xi. 14-25), and his servants to oppress the people (xii. 4, 18).

THE CHARACTER OF JEROBOAM

Jeroboam was brave, vigorous and capable, a good officer (xi. 28), and ambitious. (xi. 37.) He was driven out of Palestine by Solomon (xi. 40), and revenge may have been part of his motive in what followed. He prompted and headed the revolt against Rehoboam. This might have been due to patriotism, or to obedience to God's word by Ahijah. (xi. 29-39.) But Jeroboam's setting up the golden calves (see especially xii. 27) proves that he was simply seeking his own advancement; for he deliberately lowered the standard of religion by introducing idolatry, and wilfully added religious disunion to the political division of the nation. For these reasons he is gibbeted time after time as "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." In spite of the warnings of "the man of God which came out of Judah" (xiii. 1-6) and of Ahijah, who, if anyone, ought to have had influence over him (xiv. 7-16), he persisted in impenitence (xiii. 33), and committed sin knowing it to be sin.

THE CHARACTER OF AHAB

Ahab is the typical example of a weak man. He was the son of a vigorous and successful ruler; but though he beautified the palace (xxii. 39), he lost most of the power that Omri had gained, being defeated by Moab (see the "Moabite Stone"), and at one time almost annihilated by Syria. (xx. 15.) At last he got the enemy into his power, but let him go on a mere promise to restore the territory he had won. (xx. 34; see also xxii. 3.) Although he himself did not abjure Jehovah, he not only allowed his wife Jezebel to introduce the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, but let her do her utmost to extirpate the prophets of Jehovah (xviii. 13, 22), and in particular Elijah. (xix. 2.) He let his wife commit murder in his name, and entered on the spoil, though he would not have committed the crime himself. (xxi.) He was brought to repentance by fear of punishment (xxi. 27), but so far as we know did not amend. He imprisoned Micaiah (xxii. 27), but believed his warning, and feebly tried to avert the threatened evil. (xxii. 30.) In fact, he shows all the capricious uncertainty of a weak nature, that does not guide itself, but yields to the influence now of one, now of another.

THE CHARACTER OF ELIJAH

Elijah is one of those grand, rugged figures that every now and then stand out in history. He has no settled home, no belongings that we know of. Abruptly he enters on the scene; abruptly he reappears each time; at last he quits the world no less mysteriously. (2 Kings ii.) He is a man of the mountains—of Gilead, Carmel, and Horeb. Hardy, of great physical strength (xviii. 46), and probably a Nazarite, he lived on scant food (xvii. 6, 16; xix. 6-8), and wore the prophet's mantle. (2 Kings i. 8.) Alone he faces Ahab (xviii. 1; xxi. 18); alone he stands on Carmel against hundreds of prophets of Baal, with the great mass of the people embittered against him by the long drought. (xviii. 17, 21, 37.) Neither want nor persecution, neither fear nor despair, can force him to withhold his prophetic message, which has the bare simplicity of the two tables of the ten commandments—Jehovah is the one God of Israel (xviii. 36; 2 Kings i. 16), and Thou shalt do no murder. (xxi. 18-24.) His righteous indignation is glowing and fiery, his words on Carmel fierce and scornful (xviii. 27), his punishment of the prophets of Baal and of Ahaziah's servants ruthless. (xviii. 40; 2 Kings i. 10, 12.) Only once does he show signs of weakness, when after the strain and triumph of Carmel he sinks in the collapse of reaction into despair. (xix. 4.)

No wonder such a personality left an undying memory behind it. Malachi (iv. 5) forecasts his return; John the Baptist sets himself to follow in his steps; he appears on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 3); men thought our Lord was calling him from the Cross (Matt. xxvii. 49); and to this day (it is said) among the Jews at every circumcision a chair is set for him, at every Passover the door is left open in the hope that he may have come at last.

John the Baptist resembled Elijah in his dress (Matt. iii. 4), in making his home in the wilderness (Luke i. 80; Mark i. 4), in that he came "neither eating nor drinking." (Matt. xi. 18.) Like Elijah, he denounced sin in a king (Mark vi. 18), whose wife was his deadly foe. (Mark vi. 19.) Like Elijah, he opposed single-handed the prevailing religious tendencies of his day (Luke iii. 7-9), and preached righteousness. (Luke iii. 10-14.) And the two prophets were alike even in their fit of despair. (Matt. xi. 3, 6.)

LIST OF THE INCIDENTS IN ELIJAH'S CAREER.

- He inflicts the drought. (xvii. 1.)
 He takes refuge by the brook Cherith. (xvii. 2-7.)
 He takes refuge with the widow of Zarephath. (xvii. 8-16.)
 He restores her son to life. (xvii. 17-24.)
 He goes to meet Ahab, and summons the gathering at Carmel.
 (xviii. 1-20.)
 At Carmel. (xviii. 21-46.)
 Despair and flight to Horeb. (xix. 1-18.)
 He calls Elisha. (xix. 19-21.)
 He rebukes Ahab in Naboth's vineyard. (xxi. 17-29.)
 He rebukes king Ahaziah for sending to consult Baal-zebub
 (2 Kings i.)
 He calls down fire on two companies of soldiers sent to arrest
 him. (2 Kings i. 10, 12.)
 He is taken up to heaven. (2 Kings ii. 1-18.)
 His prophecy against Ahab fulfilled. (1 Kings xxii. 38 and
 2 Kings ix. 25, 26, 36, 37.)

OUTLINE OF THE SYRIAN WAR.

In 858, Benhadad, having defeated Ahab, shuts him up in Samaria. At last Ahab is ready to submit, but thereupon Benhadad makes the conditions impossible. The sally of the young men is successful, and Benhadad is defeated in the hills, before Samaria (xx. 1-22).

In 857, Benhadad, having reorganized his army, chooses a battlefield in the plain. Battle of Aphek. The Syrians sue for peace (xx. 23-43).

856-854. Three years' alliance between Syria and Israel (xxii. 1). In 854 the allies are defeated at Karkar by Shalmaneser II., King of Assyria.

853. Ahab, having secured the help of Jehoshaphat, attacks Syria. Battle of Ramoth-Gilead, and death of Ahab (xxii. 2-37).

THE MOABITE STONE.

Mesha, the king of Moab, mentioned in 2 Kings iii., built a high-place at Dibon in honour of the national god Chemosh. And there he set up a block of stone with an inscription describing his exploits, which was discovered in 1869, and is now in Paris. The language is Moabite, which is merely like another dialect of Hebrew, and the characters are almost the same as are found in the Siloam inscription (see note on 2 Kings xx. 20), and in certain Phœnician inscriptions, etc. This character was the common parent of (*a*) the Greek, and therefore of all European alphabets, and of (*b*) the later or "square" character used in Hebrew Bibles, etc. In the shape of some of the letters, our alphabets are more like the old than is the ordinary Hebrew letter of to-day.

The inscription begins as follows :

"I am Mesha, son of Chemoshmelek (?), king of Moab, the Dibonite. My father reigned over Moab thirty years, and I reigned after my father. And I made this high-place for Chemosh, a high-place of salvation, because he had let me see my pleasure on all them that hated me.

"Omri was King over Israel, and he afflicted Moab many days, because Chemosh was angry with his land. And his son succeeded him ; and he also said, I will afflict Moab. In my days said he thus ; but I saw my pleasure on him, and on his house, and Israel perished with an everlasting destruction.

"And Omri took possession of the land of Medeba, and (Israel) dwelt therein, during his days and half his son's days, forty years ; but Chemosh restored it in my days. . . .

"And Chemosh said to me, Go, take Nebo against Israel. And I went by night, and fought against it from break of day till noon. And I took it, and slew the whole of it, 7000 men and . . . and women, and . . . and maidservants, for I had devoted it to Ashtor-Chemosh. And I took thence the vessels of Jehovah, and I dragged them before Chemosh."

Mesha goes on to enumerate the walls, gates, towers, reservoirs, and roads that he built, mentioning in one place "the help of the prisoners of Israel."

We may notice that—

(1) Jehovah and Chemosh are put on a level, the one as the god of Israel, the other as the god of Moab. (*Cf.* p. xxiii. and note on xx. 23.)

(2) Ashtor-Chemosh is a sort of combined deity, made by fusing Chemosh with Ashtor (probably a male form of Ashtoreth, for whom see note on xi. 5).

(3) Dibon, Medeba, and Nebo all belonged to the district which Sihon, king of the Amorites, took from Moab. (Num. xxi. 26-30.) On Sihon's defeat it was given to Reuben and Gad; and in Jephthah's time (Judges xi. 12-26) Moab and Ammon in vain reasserted their claim; but in later times the towns are generally spoken of as belonging to Moab (*e.g.*, Isaiah xv. 2.)

(4) It seems that this inscription was erected in the days of Ahab, or at any rate before the defeat of Moab related in 2 Kings iii. When the inscription says Moab was subject forty years during Omri's reign and half Ahab's, it is inconsistent with the chronology of 1 Kings, which assigns to Omri twelve and to Ahab's whole reign twenty-two years. Again in 2 Kings i. 1, iii. 5, we are told that Mesha revolted after Ahab's death, not in the middle of his reign. It is easier to guess at reconciliations of these discrepancies than to be sure the guesses are right.

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